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PLEA

FOR

CHRISTIAN UNION.

BY

REV. JOHN P. CAMPBELL,
OF NASHVILLE, TENN.

"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."—MATT. xii. 25.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you."—1 COR. i. 10.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions—and avoid them."—ROM. xvi. 17.

"For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart."—JUDGES v. 16.

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DEDICATION.

TO ALL WHO LOVE OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST IN
SINCERITY :

Dear Brethren : In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and in the bonds of union, love, and peace, I feel most happy in dedicating to you this volume. You have often and earnestly inquired why those who truly love the Saviour, and pray and labor to promote the same common cause of human salvation, cannot live together in peace, unity, and love, as members of the same Christian brotherhood. You have also inquired with no less earnestness, Why is it that, during the last fifty years, so much labor, money, talents, and zeal have been appropriated at home and abroad for the spread of the gospel, with such meagre results? Whether the different sects and denominations of Christians do not need to be converted to each other, before the world can be converted to Christ; whether there must not be a truer baptism of the

Holy Ghost "into one body," and a deeper and fuller "drinking into one spirit," before the plenitude of God's power shall bless our giving and doing for the world's salvation; whether our party zeal may not have vitiated our *Christian* zeal, and the former be substituted for the latter; whether, indeed, with many of the less intelligent members of our Churches, religion is not more nominal than real and spiritual; whether on account of divisions our prayers are not hindered, and our offerings unacceptable to God?

You have inquired, also, what must be done, what steps taken, and what sacrifices made to heal the breaches in Zion, and restore the primitive unity, spirituality, and power of the Church of God. You would be happy to know that a platform of union acceptable to all true believers in Christ was now proposed and adopted, on which the whole family of God in heaven and earth might stand and rejoice together.

You are firm in the belief that the *Bible alone* contains such a platform, and that it is the duty of all believers in Christ to abandon whatever might hinder them from meeting and standing together on it. In your happier moments of fellowship with God and his dear children, you have felt perfectly willing to sacrifice your Presbyterianism, Method-

ism, Baptism, High or Low Churchism, or any thing else except Christ and the Bible, for the sake of seeing all true Christians united in one name, one communion, one ministry, and one worship. You feel that this is a glory and beatitude of which the Church is entirely unworthy, and of which, in her present divided state, she can have no just appreciation; yet that it is not more than the word of God requires and promises, nor is it more than God can and will do for his own people. God's word and Spirit must both show the way, and give the grace and strength to walk in it. Let us lay our hearts open to these heavenly teachings, and go with thankful and willing steps wherever they may lead us.

It will be your pleasure to take sweet counsel with your brethren in Christ, having the word of God to guide you, as the same shall be our guide in the suggestions, arguments, and appeals of the work hereby dedicated to you.

If you will read it in the spirit in which it is written, it will do you good. Sitting at the feet of Jesus, with hearts melting with adoring love and gratitude for his forgiving mercy and redeeming grace, you will hail with joy any scriptural plan of union, by which the breaches in Zion shall be healed, and her reproaches taken away; by which

she shall "arise and shine, her light having come, and the glory of the Lord having risen upon her."

Then shall the Church be worthy of the glory given her by Christ, as he said in his last prayer for her: "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me."

In the name and in behalf of the excellent Christian brethren who have written essays for this work, you will indulge me in asking at your hands a patient, kind, and impartial reading. You will join me in tendering to them a tribute of cordial Christian gratitude, for the catholic spirit and able manner in which they have treated the subject. You will also join them and the author in unceasing and fervent prayer to Almighty God, that this humble volume may, by his blessing, contribute something to the more earnest and prayerful reading of the word of God, a higher and more scriptural standard of personal piety, and a more perfect unity of faith, ministry, and worship, in the Church of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E .

CLOSING a term of four years' apprenticeship to the cabinet business, in the year 1822, the author was the subject of deep convictions of mind that he ought to preach the gospel of Christ. Trembling with a sense of the awful solemnity of the work, and of his conscious inability to perform it, he sought in prayer to God, and the counsel and advice of friends, to know what he should do. Yielding to convictions of duty, and following the openings of Divine Providence, he put himself into the Wirtemberg Academy, where, in two years, he obtained what at that time was considered a good English education. The Holy Bible was his first and last text-book in the study of theology. He read Burder's Village Sermons, Wesley's Sermons, Whitefield's Life and Sermons, M'Gready's Sermons, Baxter's Call and Saints' Rest, Simpson's Plea, Wesley on Original Sin, Benson's Sermons, Dwight's Theology, Scott's Commentaries on the New Testament, Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures, etc. But, in all these, he felt the constant necessity of appealing to the law and the testimony of God's word. In October, 1824, he was licensed to preach the gospel, and entered at once

upon the work as a missionary, supplying small vacant congregations and destitute neighborhoods, in a large district of Tennessee. In this field he labored for several years, preaching and exhorting, day and night, with a success of which he is not here permitted to speak.

In the meantime, he received a commission from the American Sunday-School Union, which he accepted; and under the direction of which he travelled and labored one year. The broad and catholic commission of this noble institution made it his duty to visit, preach, and coöperate with all Christian denominations in building up Sabbath-schools, in which the *distinctive* doctrines of no particular Church were taught, but in which the *essential* doctrines of *all* were taught. This new and large field of labor led him into a new train of thoughts and feelings, and a wider range of religious enjoyment. He found (much to his joy) that there were many brethren good and true in all the leading denominations of the South and West, whose convictions for sin, repentance, faith in Christ, joy for sins forgiven, love to God and love to man, and hope of eternal life, were like his own, as much so as if they had been converted in his own Church.

He saw also, in a few years, that the Sabbath teaching and training of these schools gave a better type of Christianity—more pure, consistent, and uniform. He saw also that when ministers and brethren of different Churches came together to hold what were called Union-meetings, their ser-

mons were more practical, spiritual, and powerful. Freed, for the time being, from the dogmas of party and the trammels of sect, they rose into the higher and purer atmosphere of holy love. When they called each other brother, under such circumstances, you could see in the eye, and feel in the shake of the hand, that it was *cordial, earnest, and true*.

How different that cold, left-hand fellowship, given at arm's-length, over a partition-wall too high and wide to admit that warm embrace in which each heart feels the throbbing of Christian sympathy!

These experiences led him from year to year to more and more serious doubts, whether there was not something wrong in the present divided state of the Church. Yet he hesitated to admit the conviction that the venerated fathers who had founded the Church, and who by the blessing of God had brought him into it, might be involved in the sin of division. That divisions in the Church were sinful, and unauthorized by the word of God, he could not doubt. But how and when they came into existence, he was then at a loss to know; also, how and when to be remedied, he was equally at a loss to know. "For the divisions of Reuben, there were great searchings of heart." Judges v. 16. There must be great searching of the history of the Church, of the Bible, and of the heart, to find the cause and remedy of divisions in the Church of Christ; and the sooner these searchings begin, and with the more candor and earnestness prosecuted,

the sooner will the cause be found and repented of, and so much the sooner will the remedy be applied, and the Church restored to unity and peace.

The existing order of things, like an evil genius, had fixed itself as an incubus upon his soul, so that he shrank instinctively from the first rays of Divine light that came from the word of God to show the sin of division in the Church. He tried to find some passage in the Bible to authorize it. Finding none, he then supposed that it might be a necessity growing out of the moral constitution of society, and that therefore it needed no law to authorize it, but only a law to *regulate* it. For *this*, he found the Bible as destitute of a law or rule as for the former. Finding no law either to authorize, or to regulate, or to direct the conduct of a divided Church, he then adopted the more common apòlogy for the divisions of the Church, by reasoning that the rival interests of different Churches would stimulate zeal and investigation, and thus develop and propagate truth, and therefore they were justifiable. But he found that this reasoning, which at first sight was so plausible, was highly dishonoring to God, and detrimental to truth. It implies a want of wisdom and foresight in Him who constituted the Church one and indivisible, and insists that God's plan must be changed or amended.

2d. This reasoning implies that the truth of God has not in itself intrinsic value and loveliness enough to prompt the investigation and love of it, and therefore it needs the extraneous motives of

rival interests to develop, love, and propagate it. "God's work is perfect;" "his commandment holy, just, and good." He that adds thereto, or diminishes therefrom, will meet a fearful doom. The hand put forth to stay the Ark must wither.

After long and painful suspense of mind, sometimes amounting to agony, he came to the settled conviction that divisions in the Church of Christ are sinful and wicked, that they are full of evil to the Church and to the world, and that she can never fill her great mission until she is united. He therefore felt it to be his duty to call Christians together for prayer and consultation in regard to the best means of promoting union. He has found many pious and excellent brethren in all the Churches who enter fully into his views and sympathies, and who are ready to sustain any prudent and scriptural movement to restore union, peace, and love to the household of faith. Men and measures for union are multiplying every day, both in this country and in Europe. God's Spirit is stirring the hearts of his people to desire and pray for it. Ministers and laymen are preaching and writing and praying for it more earnestly and with hopes of speedier success.

With these convictions, slowly at first, but now very deeply fixed in his mind, from long and prayerful study of the Scriptures, he feels it a duty to contribute, to the utmost of his feeble abilities, to restore unity and harmony in the Church of Jesus Christ. Few works have been published on

this subject, and they have had a limited circulation, from the fact that the authors have not only indicated but insisted that their own Church must be the basis of union. This vein of sectarianism, cropping out at the end of an argument for union, however strong, logical, and scriptural it may be, mars its beauty, and destroys its power to do good. This the author has studiously avoided. He indicates no Church as the basis or nucleus of union. He insists that the *Holy Bible* is the only true basis of union, and that the *truth*, and *love*, and *power* of God only can bring Christians to unite on that basis. For this he insists that Christians must pray to God, searching his holy word fully and without bias toward their own favorite creed or Church.

The PLEA FOR CHRISTIAN UNION was intended to be published at an earlier date; but the want of means to bring it out, together with a consciousness of his inability to treat the subject with such delicacy and prudence as its importance demanded, caused the delay. In the meantime, he has freely conferred with many pious and excellent brethren of different Churches, who approve of his views as sound and scriptural, and who bid him a hearty God-speed in the work.

He has also procured able and well-written articles from distinguished brethren of several different sects, in all of which the reader will find a most happy coincidence of views, both as to the evils of division, and the necessity that something must be done to remedy these evils. There is nothing sec-

tarian in the Prize Essays, nor is any one denomination indicated as a nucleus or beginning-point for union. It is insisted that we must be willing for it to come in any form and in any Church that shall be most consonant with Bible truth, and that shall bring glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to men.

That the testimony of the word of God is complete and incontrovertible on the subject of Christian union, no one will deny.

2. That such union is desirable, no one will deny.

3. That divisions and contentions in the Church of Christ are deplorable and unhappy, no one will deny.

These facts admitted, is it not very strange that any effort to restore the Christian Church to its original and constitutional unity, should be regarded (as it is by some) as chimerical, utopian, and impracticable?

By many others it is admitted that the present divided state of the Church is wrong and sinful, but that the *time* to remedy this evil has not yet come, and that when it *does* come, it will require much time and labor to accomplish it. Admitting, as we must, if we believe the word of God, that the Church of Christ is constituted one and indivisible, and that, therefore, its divided state is wrong and sinful, we must also admit the paramount obligation to do all that lies within our power to remedy this evil. And if, as we admit, it must require

much time and labor to accomplish it, we ought to begin the sooner and work the harder until it is accomplished.

Multiplied thousands of our race, both in heathen and Christian lands, are yearly perishing for the bread of life. The piteous wailing comes to us upon the moaning winds of heaven, from China and Japan, from the East and West Indies, from Africa and South America, from the thousands of islands that spot the Atlantic and Pacific, the Northern and Southern Oceans—"Come over and help us." Even the oppressed and down-trodden by the Papal hierarchy are panting for the freedom of the sons of God, and are asking an interest in our prayers. They are only restrained from bursting the fetters that bind them, by the constant reiteration of their priests, that "the Protestants are heretics and dogs, as is demonstrated by their constantly increasing divisions and their endless and bitter controversies among themselves." From hence comes our disability to answer the calls for help, now coming from every quarter of the globe. Mocked and insulted by the taunts and jeers of infidels and the Roman priesthood on the one hand, and beset by the piteous cries of the heathen world upon the other—conscious at the same time of our own weakness, by reason of the "divisions and contentions" in our ranks—what shall we do? Shall we go on dividing and subdividing, "biting and devouring one another," until we are "consumed one of another?" Shall we go on in this sui-

cidal course until we make the proof full and complete to our enemies and to all the world that we are "Antichrist?" No! no! no! Ten thousand Noes! from the best men in all Protestant Christendom. No. Let us humble our hearts before the Lord our God, with penitent confessions of our sins, and the sins of our fathers, in dividing and separating from one another. Let us pray for the baptism of the *one* Spirit into *one* body, so that, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, we may all drink into one Spirit. Then, let us arise from this confession, prayer, and holy baptism of the Spirit, and come together in the name of the Lord of hosts, and adopt a platform of union and recognition, acceptable to all converted Christian men.

The Church of Rome boasts of her unity. True, she has a visible unity in the Pope, but no spiritual unity in Christ. O that she had! then her zeal for the Pope would be transferred to Christ.

We boast of our spiritual unity in Christ, (?) but have no visible unity with each other. We must have both. The primitive Church had both. For two hundred and fifty years neither the one nor the other was violated. During this happy period of her pristine purity and love, she was mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin and pagan idolatry.

Let us repeat, we must have both spiritual unity in Christ and visible unity with one another. We shall then be freed from the disability to answer the calls for help from the heathen. We shall then

go forth with the Master's great commission, "and preach the gospel to every creature." The mouth of our enemies shall be stopped, and our reproaches shall be wiped away.

Be of good courage, brethren, man up your faith. See the earnest movements of our dear brethren in Europe and this country toward a more close and real union of all true believers in Christ. These movements have inspired new hope and confidence for the cause of union. Daily union prayer-meetings are held in the principal cities of Protestant Christendom, conducted chiefly by laymen and young men in the Church. A striking evidence of the unselfish nature and spiritual power of these meetings may be seen in the fact that the intelligent laymen in the Roman Catholic Church in France and Italy have sent special requests for prayer that they may be freed from the temporal power of the Pope, and that their countries and all the world may obtain religious liberty.

Next to a firm trust in the power and grace of God, we must look for the cordial support and coöperation of all candid and liberal Christian men, for success in this great reform. "Good men, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," must meet together to consult, to pray, to call conventions and to appoint missions in behalf of union. Every effort to form a new party, even for union, must be earnestly discouraged. Wherever there may be a hope of uniting two or more branches of the Church, every encouragement should be given.

Every step in this direction will strengthen hope and encourage the friends of union. A few examples of union in this way would show its practicability, and its blessed results would stimulate others to follow. Thus we may provoke one another to love and good works.

The author will be most happy, if the humble offering herewith made for the cause of union may draw the hearts of God's dear children closer together. O that it may open and warm the heart; that it may excite desire and stimulate hope; that it may give to prayer the wings of faith and love, and that it may lead all to "unity of the faith in the bond of peace."

O for such a union as Christ prayed for in the 17th chapter of John! Then the world would believe; then the zeal of the Roman Catholic would be transferred from the Pope to Christ; then would Pagan idolatry and Mohammedan delusion "fall like lightning to the ground;" then the infidel and skeptic kneel with devout penitence at the foot of the cross of Christ; and then, Jesus Christ shall reign "King of nations, as he is King of saints." Amen.



PLEA FOR CHRISTIAN UNION.

PRAYER.

O ALMIGHTY God ! thy word is truth, displaying the glory of thy wisdom, power, and love in the creation and preservation of all thy creatures. All thy works praise thee, and thy saints bless thee. Thine is the glory of the plan of human salvation, in which mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. O, give to thy servant who writes, and to thy servants who may read this work dedicated to thy Catholic Church, wisdom to understand and the power of faith to appropriate the saving benefits of Christ's most precious atonement and mediation ; so that we may all come into the unity of faith and the bond of peace.

O Heavenly Father ! we ask of thee that wisdom that cometh down from above, which is *pure, gentle, easily to be entreated, without partiality, and without hypocrisy*. May we seek to "increase more and more" in that charity which hideth the multitude of faults, which is the bond of perfectness, and which never faileth. O, deliver us from evil, from

selfishness, sectarian bigotry, from all malice and guile and evil-speaking, and all uncharitable judgment of our brethren in Christ. And as we read thy word in whole, or the consecutive order of texts in relation to the unity of the Church, and the means of maintaining and preserving the same, O may we see new beauties in its doctrinal harmony, and gain new strength from its heavenly spirit. Holding to Christ as the Head, of whom the whole family of God in heaven and earth are named, may we all be of one heart and one soul, love as brethren, bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Most merciful Father, hear our prayer, which we humbly offer in the name of thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We rejoice to know that thou art well pleased with him, that thou always hearest him, and that thou wilt in no wise cast off any one, however unworthy, that comes to thee in his name. Our hope, our help, our *all* is in thee. Without thee, we can do nothing. But through thy grace strengthening us, we can do all things. O most blessed and holy God, show us what to do, and then give us grace and strength to do it, whatever it may be. May we esteem no sacrifice too great to make for Christ, who gave his life a ransom for the Church.

Thou hast given to thy Son the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, and thou hast put into the hands of the Church the great commission, Go ye into

all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. But alas for us, that we are so slow to go ourselves, and still slower to help them that would go! Many of us are dumb dogs, that will not bark, sleeping, lying down, each one looking for gain from his quarter, looking for "fat livings," at ease in Zion. Some of us are miserable hirelings, who care nothing for the sheep. O Almighty God, have mercy upon us! and give us hearts to feel for the perishing millions of our race, who are without God and without hope in the world! "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that these mountains may flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth." Afflict the Church, judge and punish the nations, shake the earth, until all shall confess thy name, and bow to thy supreme authority.

The Lord go with our dear brethren who have gone to far-distant lands, to preach salvation to the lost. Open their way before them, and open the hearts of the millions in Pagan darkness, that they may attend unto the things spoken by thy servants.

Open the hearts of all thy servants to give, to labor, to pray, to believe, and look for the answer of our Lord's prayer, "That all that believe on him might be one, as he and the Father are one, that the world might believe."

For thy great mercy, hear our prayer, forgive our sins, and accept our persons and services, in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY—CONSECUTIVE ORDER OF TEXTS BEARING UPON THIS, FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER I.

FROM MATTHEW TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

“BLESSED are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.” Matt. v. 9. Here the highest honor and happiness are conferred upon the peacemakers. What shall become of the peace-breakers? “Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Matt. v. 23, 24. Christ’s Sermon on the Mount is inimitably sublime in moral beauty. There is nothing like it in Pagan philosophy or human ethics. No text has more striking or universal application to the purpose of our argument than the one here quoted. Understood and practiced, there would, there never could have been any division in the Church. How many gifts are lying before the altar, which perhaps will never be offered acceptably! When we value reconciliation and peace with all Christian brethren, as we value our own per-

sonal salvation, then we will take the scriptural steps to procure and preserve them. It seems to me that if any Christian duty is essential to salvation, this must be. It is certainly the basis of Christian unity, and therefore an essential instrumentality of the world's conversion. It may be well for us to pause a moment, and inquire what influence our divisions and contentions may be exerting at this time upon our ministry, our prayers, and our offerings for the conversion of the heathen and the salvation of the world. David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." If the prayers of the husband and wife, heirs together of the grace of life, are hindered by a slight interruption of the tender and peaceful relations between them, how may the prayers of our Christian Churches be hindered by the unhappy schisms and bitter controversies which have not only interrupted but broken up those very tender relations existing between them! As members of the same body, branches of the same vine, and children of the same Father, their relations to each other must be very tender and sacred.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses." Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15.

We have never seen a comment upon this passage that added any thing to its force or beauty. To the

ingenuous heart, it commends and enforces itself with a power that must be felt for good.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Matt. vii. 1, 2. Christ is both a merciful and just Judge; one who “will do right.” We may, therefore, rest satisfied with our cause in his hands. We are weak, and liable to err in judgment. “Let us, therefore, not judge one another any more.” He that makes the greatest ado about the faults of others, is most blind to his own. “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.” Matt. vii. 3–5. Our first and greatest work is at home—to get a deep and scriptural knowledge of ourselves, to know that our own hearts are right with God. This done, we can feel and act right towards others.

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.” Matt. vii. 12. How admirably this golden rule applies to the restoring and maintaining peace and unity with all Christian brethren! Do you ask to read and understand the word of God for yourself, and to be

your own judge of what you shall believe and do? Very well, let your Christian brother do the same. Would you have him bear with your foibles and follies, to forgive you, pray for you, love you, and speak kindly of you? Very well, you do the same towards him, and you will both be the happier and better Christians. You will never fall out: you will never separate on earth nor in heaven.

“Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.” Matt. xii. 25. The Church of Christ is a kingdom, a city, a temple, in which unity is the *essential* element of its strength; hence the many earnest commands, prohibitions, prayers, exhortations, and examples, by which Christ and his apostles taught and enforced the doctrine of the unity of the Church. If unity be an essential element of her strength and perpetuity, division is the certain element of her weakness, decay, and downfall.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Cor. i. 10. “For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” Matt. xii. 50. “Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.” Whom Christ receives, forgives, and owns as his “brother, and sister, and mother,” surely we can—

we *must*. “Not the hearer,” the theorist, the speculative stickler for sectarian dogmas, but the “*doers* of the word are justified.” Good works are the best evidences of a good faith and a good heart.

“But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Matt. xv. 9. Neither the laws of synods and councils, nor the dogmas of Colleges of Bishops, have any authority in the worship of God. The pure word of God, without the intermixture of human wisdom, or traditions of the fathers, is the only guide to a true and acceptable worship.

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Matt. xviii. 15–17. This simple rule, given by the great Lawgiver and Head of the Church, will apply to the settlement of all offences in practice, and differences of opinion, among Christians. If the standard of Christian character be established by the word of God, which may be comprehended in two words, piety and morality, then, by this rule of Divine authority, all the divisions in the Church may be healed, and universal peace and unity restored. “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye,

but not to doubtful disputations." If his heart be right and his life good, though he may not be able to pronounce the shibboleth of your province or Church, you are bound to receive him. "Then Peter came to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." Matt. xviii. 21, 22. Forgive as long as you need forgiveness of God. Forgive as you would have your brother forgive you. Forgive ever.

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. xxii. 37-40. Supreme happiness consists in loving supreme moral excellence. Therefore, true religion confers upon man the highest happiness of which his moral nature is capable, by transferring the affections of his heart to God, the infinite ocean of love. The more we love God, the more we must love every creature, and every object that bears any relation or likeness to him. And we will love every creature of God according to its intrinsic moral excellence, or in proportion to its likeness to him.

"But be ye not called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is

your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ." Matt. xxiii. 8-10.

All ye are brethren—all equal: no D.D.'s: no Right Reverend Bishop Peter. Nothing of this during the two hundred and fifty years of primitive simplicity, unity, and power of the Christian Church. No distinction, except he that was least was the greatest; he that was lowest was highest; and he that labored and sacrificed most for Christ, was most honored and happy.

"Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, (only,) but him that sent me."

"And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not with us, and we forbade him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak of me. For he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the midst of the sea." Mark ix. 37-42.

Here Christ recognizes one that was working for him, and in his name, though he followed not in

the company of his disciples. Even the loving disciple (John) had forbidden him to work for Christ, because, as he supposed, he had no authority to teach—because he followeth not us. The whole lesson of the Saviour here shows how we should receive and treat the weak and little ones that believe in him, and also what fearful judgments must come upon any that might offend them. Do they “belong to Christ?” is the great question of recognition and fellowship. Let them work in whatever part of the great field—the world—they may choose; let them choose their own distinctive forms of worship and government, and show that they “belong to Christ.” “All ye are brethren.” Then all is right.

“But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you; but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister; and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Mark x. 42-45.

The occasion of this excellent lesson was, that James and John had requested that they might have the honor of sitting next to Christ, on his right hand and on his left, in the throne of his power. This gave offence to the other ten.

He refers them to the oppressive kingly govern-

ments of the Pagan nations around them, and authoritatively says, *So it shall not be with you.*

To what extent this Divine law is violated by the union of Church and State, by the Papal hierarchy and by the Church of England, must be left to the candor of the intelligent and unbiased reader. Certain it is, that pride, selfishness, and clerical ambition have ever been the fruitful sources of division in the Church of Christ.

“And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.” John x. 5. The first salutation and the last benediction of the gospel is peace. The first, the last, and the best bequest of Christ to the Church is peace. O let the peace of God dwell and rule in the Church! Amen.

“How can ye believe which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?” John v. 44. One of the many sins of the divided Church is, that men are prompted to take the leadership of a party, and seek honor one of another. The contest that begins in the right spirit for truth, mostly ends in the flesh. In the struggle for the mastery, the spirit of love is lost; truth is lost; “the honor that comes from God only” is lost sight of, and it ends in a matter of personal honor. Finally, a partition wall of separation between them is erected as the terms of settlement, or rather as perpetual hostility: thus adding to the sin of unchristian controversy, that of division.

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this

fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." John x. 16.

The Jews, and even the disciples of Christ, were slow to believe that any other nations were entitled to the immunities of the Church of God except their own. But they were here informed that Christ, the Good Shepherd, had other sheep, which were not of that fold, whom he must bring in, and that there should be one fold and one shepherd. The light and power of the gospel broke down the partition walls between them, and both Jews and Gentiles were made one in Christ.

"And this spake he (Caiaphas) not of himself, but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in *one* the children of God that were scattered abroad." John xi. 51, 52. No paraphrase can make these words teach more fully and forcibly the doctrine of Christian unity—that the children of God, wherever scattered abroad, are one. The mission of the gospel is to gather them together in one—one family, one loving brotherhood of children of God, all true believers, that the world may know, "that the world may believe," etc.

The world will not, *cannot* believe without this *true, catholic, visible* unity of the Church. And with this unity, the world shall know and believe the doctrine of Christ: it is Heaven's appointed means of accomplishing it. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

The sooner, therefore, the children of God come together in *one*, with mutual love, with ingenuous confessions and forgiveness for the sin of being so long divided and scattered abroad, the sooner will the world come bending and submitting to the cross of Christ. Let no one say, "A lion is in the way:" its mouth shall be closed. Let no one say, "A mountain is in the way:" "it shall flow down at the presence of the Lord, as when the melting fire burneth." The high and massy walls which have so long separated the children of God, shall tumble to the ground at the blast of the trumpet, and the shouts of God's united hosts; "for when God shall bring back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice and Israel shall be glad; for the watchmen in Zion shall see eye to eye, and all the people of God shall lift up the voice together and sing."

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." John xiii. 20. Ministers, sent of Christ, must receive one another. And if they receive one another, they can surely do it more cordially and acceptably in the same than in separate communions. By the same act we receive our brethren, our Saviour, and our Father in heaven, and we cannot receive one without the others, nor reject one without rejecting the others. "I in them and thou in me, that they may be one in us, that the world may believe." "A new commandment I give unto you,

That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John xiii. 34, 35.

What a commandment! and what an example for its performance! *As I have loved you.* How tender, forgiving, earnest, and abiding is his love! So let Christians love one another.

Take another view of this example. Christ knows the heart perfectly; knows that man in his best estate is altogether vanity; knows how his love is mixed with all weakness, selfishness, and sin; still he loves, and loves to the end. If Christians knew all the envies, jealousies, and imperfections of each other, there might be some apology for the coldness of their love. They see the best of each other. Christ sees all—the worst of them—yet he loves them with a love so perfect, that it hides a multitude, ay, all their faults. So let Christians love one another.

Lastly, what a motive to its performance! All men shall know that ye are my disciples. The mouths of opposers and gainsayers shall be stopped, skeptics confounded, schismatics ashamed, infidels converted, the Jews brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles, Antichrist overthrown, Babylon the great fallen, and the old serpent, the devil, bound and cast into the bottomless pit. All men shall know, obey, and love the Lord. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye

in me, and I in you. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." John xiv. 20, 27. "I am the vine, and ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." John xv. 5. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." John xv. 12. "These things I command you, that you love one another." John xv. 17.

Why did Christ repeat so often this new, this great commandment—enforce it by his own example, and the awfully solemn considerations, that by it they should know themselves to be his disciples, and the world should know him to be the Christ, the sent of God? "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." John xv. 14. It was to infix this precious truth in their very souls, as the chief element of their life, as the key to their unity, and the instrument of the world's salvation.

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word.

"Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, and

they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

“I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now cometh I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe in me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world

may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." John xvii. 5-23.

Whether we consider the *occasion*, the *manner*, the *matter*, or the *object* of this prayer, it is full of interest both to the Church and to the world.

1st. The *occasion* was deeply solemn. He was about closing his ministry and mission on earth. He was near the agony of the garden of Gethsemane, and the passion of Mount Calvary; yet he alludes to neither.

2d. The *manner* of it is as simple as it is sublime and solemn.

3d. The *matter* comprehends every thing of grand interest to God's moral universe: *one* petition only for himself—that he might be reinvested with his Father's glory, which he had with him before the world was; *one* petition that none of them should be lost; *one* petition that they should be kept from the evils of the world, and *three* petitions that they might be one with each other, as he and his Father were one. This prayer embraced not only his disciples then with him, but also all them that should believe in him through their word.

The best conception of the sublime and ineffable unity of the adorable Godhead ever given, was seen in the primitive unity of believers in Christ. No

mortal tongue or pen can describe nor imagination conceive the perfect unity of the blessed Persons of the Holy Trinity; yet this unity is given as the pattern and example for the unity of the Church of Christ, as the highest glory of its refulgent light, and the secret of its godlike power, in bringing the world to the faith and obedience of Jesus Christ. This unity of believers in Christ is the best description and illustration of the divinity, unity, and glory of the Godhead that ever has or can be given to the world.

The abstractions of reason and the speculations of philosophy, unsanctified by the grace of God, only darken counsel by words without knowledge. These latter address the intellect, leaving the heart untouched and cold. The former addresses both the understanding and the heart, and quickens into life the highest virtues of the Christian character—unity, love, and peace. The twenty-second and twenty-third verses of this chapter bring such glory and blessing to the Church, so overwhelming in power and grandeur, that the pen falters in the attempt to elaborate them. Let us read, and wonder and adore, and love and praise. “The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me.” This is glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will towards men. Let mortals catch the music of the heavenly spheres,

and shout back the soul-inspiring melody, Unto Him who hath redeemed us, and washed us in his own precious blood, unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

4th. The *object* of this prayer, that the world may believe, that the world may know, etc. God so loved the world that he gave his Son to die for it. Christ came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. The Holy Ghost came to guide and comfort the Church, and convince the world. What a mission has Heaven sent to our world for its salvation! "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so," said Christ, "have I sent them (his disciples) into the world:" on the same mission, and for the same purpose. As Christ is the light of the world, so is the Church. As Christ is one with the Father, so is the Church one with Christ; and so did he pray that they might be one with each other, that the world, whom the Father loved, for whom the Saviour died, and whom the Spirit enlightens, might be saved. What a mission has the Church! What honor has Christ bestowed upon her instrumentality in the salvation of the world! Shall she abuse and forfeit such a mission, such honor, by division in her own ranks?

Can the Church hope to make aggressions upon Pagan idolatry or Papal corruptions, while she is biting and devouring herself with unholy controversy, and endless divisions and separations? Can she hope that the world will believe or know Christ and his saving truth, while she is virtually dividing

and mangling the body of her Lord? Impossible! How long shall the world lie in sin and moral death? The only answer is, Until the Church shall arise and shine in her primitive beauty, unity, and power—until she shall come up from the wilderness of confusion and division, leaning upon the bosom of her Beloved, beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners.

Any effort to restore the unity of the Church, however prudent and scriptural, may be regarded as visionary, chimerical, and even heterodox. It must be so, by every one whose sickly and bigoted soul believes that the world can only be converted by being able to believe and celebrate the peculiar tenets of his own party. There are many little souls, that can only move in the filthy slime of their own diseased and festering sectarianism. But thanks be unto our God, there are many in all our Churches whose enlarged and liberal souls are panting for a higher life, even for communion and fellowship with the whole united family of believers in Christ. Let no one then say, that “the genius of the existing order of things cannot be changed.” It can be changed by the power of God.

God’s word teaches that the Church shall be *one—one body, one fold, one family*—and that “*there shall be no divisions among them.*” Yet the Church has said, We will have them, and God permitted them. So did he permit our first parents to eat the prohibited fruit; so did he permit the building of the tower of Babel; Joseph’s brethren to sell him to the Egyp-

tian merchants; the Israelites to elect Saul king over them; a faction of the Jewish Church to build another temple at Mt. Gerizim, dividing them in the worship and service of God. Will it be argued that because God permitted these evils, the perpetrators were justifiable? or that, because the wise and merciful providence of God brought good out of the judgments visited upon them, (not out of these evils themselves, but their consequences,) therefore the perpetrators were justifiable? Just such, precisely, is the reasoning of the apologists for divisions in the Church. This is the old pious fraud, "that the end justifies the means;" that we may "do evil that good may come."

That the providence of God will bring good out of the *results* of divisions in the Church, (not out of divisions themselves,) cannot be doubted; but that this good will counterbalance the evils brought upon the Church and the world, by the divisions of the Church, cannot be shown. An attempt to prove it, would be an attempt to prove that we may do evil that good might come.

For nearly three hundred years after the organization of the Christian Church, there was no division into sects. What was done towards the conversion of the world in that short period, may indicate what would have been done by this time, had the Church continued in her primitive unity, spirituality, zeal, and power.

The word of God had free course and was glorified. Every part of the Roman Empire, embracing

at that time every civilized nation upon the globe, was brought under the influence of the gospel. But, alas! selfish and ambitious men sprang up in the Church; the struggle for power led to bitter controversies; these led to divisions; and these divisions sought unholy alliance with the State, as the means of power to crush out their rivals. The intelligent reader knows what followed during the dark ages of twelve centuries.

A few proscribed and persecuted Christians, shut out from the observation of the world, maintained the ordinances of the gospel and the true worship of God during these long ages of darkness; so that God was not without witnesses for his truth. At length, God raised up Martin Luther, with a host of faithful and zealous co-laborers, to stand forth the bold and successful preachers of justification by faith in Christ.

For many years—nearly one hundred—they maintained the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. No divisions occurred among them during this time. We need not inform the reader that during the time that the reformed Church was united, she was invincible through Christ. The light and power of true religion went forth as a lamp that burneth; the powers of darkness were driven back. Anti-christ was shaken and shorn of his strength, and the world seemed ready to welcome the millennial glory of the Church.

As soon, however, as these illustrious servants of God passed away, the din of strife began to be heard,

the love of many waxed cold, and points of difference in regard to minor doctrines and mere forms of worship were insisted upon as essential to unity and fellowship in the Church. Forbearance, forgiveness, and Christian liberty—the fruits of love—lost their power, and division and separation followed, and they still follow in such rapid succession, that the head is giddy and the heart is sick that looks to the end of them. How or when they shall end, no one can tell. End they will—end they must—whether by the pressure of outward foes, sword, and fire, and blood; or by the general outpouring of God's Spirit in answer to prayer, confession, repentance, faith, forgiveness, and perfect love; or by the second coming of Christ, in person, to destroy his enemies, unite his people, and reign King of all nations, as he is King of saints. Or whether all three of these great events shall at the same time exert their joint influence to bring an end to divisions in the Church, time and the providence of God must develop.

It must appear desirable to all, that a voluntary coming together of all that truly love the Saviour, with penitent, believing, and persevering prayer and trust in God, is the most happy and scriptural mode of bringing it about.

Christ rejoiced to know that the Father always heard him. He therefore prayed in faith when he prayed that the Church might be one. He knew what he prayed for. Every one that knows what it is to love God, has prayed that the partition walls

which separate the children of God might be broken down, and that true love and union might prevail and reign in every branch of the Church. Has Christ and the whole Church prayed in vain for union? No, the whole Church prays and looks for it. The world looks for it, as its hopes of salvation hang tremblingly upon it. It will come, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Let every Christian heart say Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES TO FIRST CORINTHIANS.

“THESE all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” Acts i. 14. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all of one accord in one place.” Acts ii. 1. “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Acts ii. 42. “And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.” Acts ii. 46, 47.

Such was the union and consequent strength and prosperity of the primitive Church. Like causes produce like effects. Let the Church now come together with *one accord*, *one heart*, *one fellowship*, *one breaking of bread*, steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, and in prayers, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow the Christian world, and

Satan shall fall like lightning to the ground. "And the multitude of them that believed were of *one heart and one soul.*" Acts iv. 32.

"And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them (the Gentiles) the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God? When they (the church at Jerusalem had opposed Peter, for taking the Gentiles into the fellowship of the Church) heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts xi. 15-18. Do they not withstand God, who refuse to receive and fellowship those to whom he has given his Spirit, and whose lives exhibit the fruits of the Spirit?

"And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Acts xv. 1. This is very much like the importance attached to outward ordinances by some of later times.

"And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among us that the Gen-

tiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." Acts xv. 6-9. "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren; and they wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles, and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment: it seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well." Acts xv. 22-29.

Thus was the first serious trouble in the new

Church settled without division or separation. This church-meeting consisted of apostles, elders, and *the whole Church*; by whom the question was fully discussed, and by whom the delegation, with a short letter of greeting and pacification, was sent down to the troubled church at Antioch. "So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the whole multitude together, they delivered the epistle. Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation." Acts xv. 30, 31.

We will not say whether the *apostles*, the *elders*, or the "*whole Church*," had the greatest power and authority in this council. A plain, front view of it looks as if it was episcopacy, presbyterianism, and congregationalism, all mixed up, and about equally balanced. There are distinctive features of episcopacy, presbyterianism, and congregationalism in the government of the New Testament Church. It is not in my power to state which feature is more distinct. May they not all three be requisite to the proper government of the Church? If so, it is wrong to adopt any *one* feature to the exclusion of the other two. The outward form of government will be of very little importance, where Christ rules as King in Zion, and the love of God governs the heart and life of Christians.

"And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren, in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined

to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus. And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God." Acts xv. 36-40. Here was a sharp contention, but no division of the Church.

"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. i. 7. It is not a little remarkable that the mission of Christ opens and closes with the salutation of peace, and that the Epistles do the same. "And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God." Rom. ix. 26. If this prophecy was fulfilled in the union of the Jews and Gentiles in our gospel Church, making of these twain one new man, so making peace, may not the restoration of the primitive unity of the Church bring into it many of whom it is now said, "Ye are not my people?" "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. x. 12, 13. May not all to whom the word of the Lord promises salvation be-

long to the same Church? Listen to that petition put into the mouth and heart of every true child of God: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." How is it done in heaven? By the discordant elements of strife and division? Are there partition walls running in every direction through the city of the New Jerusalem? No.

*"One family, we dwell in Him;
One Church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream, of death."*

They are all one. So we are taught to pray it may be on earth; so our blessed Lord prayed that it might be on earth—that the world might believe. John xvii. 21. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in

tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them who persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Rom. xii. 4-21.

Here is a constellation of Christian virtues, each having a specific application to the maintenance and preservation of unity, love, and peace. Written in the heart and radiating in the life, they will explain how the Church is the light of the world, the salt of the earth. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii. 8-10. After the enforcement of these holy virtues in the 12th and 13th chapters, how pertinent the application of the laws of forbearance and liberty, which Paul makes in the 14th and 15th

chapters! "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth; for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks." Rom. xiv. 1-6. "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." Rom. xiv. 10. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ

died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of; for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." Rom. xiv. 12-22.

The laws of forbearance and liberty, as here set forth, will apply to all matters, both of faith and practice, which do not involve our personal salvation, or the standard of sound Christian character. Let us see how they will apply in the settlement of some of the leading points of difference which have divided the Church into sects, viz.:

1. The doctrine of election—is it from eternity, or from the time the sinner repents and believes the gospel?
2. The final perseverance of believers.
3. The form of Church government.
4. The form of water baptism.
5. The subjects of water baptism.
6. Open or free communion.
7. The standard of ministerial qualification—education.
8. Psalmody.
9. Apostolic succession.
10. Church rituals.
11. High Churchmen, or Low. Others less important

might be given, but these must suffice our purpose.

The question is, will the affirmative or negative side of any one or all of these points, necessarily involve the salvation of the soul? In other words, is it not admitted that pious persons—persons believing the great doctrines of grace, and salvation by faith in Christ—honestly differ with each other on these points? Well, here is the rule: “Hast thou faith?” faith differing from thy brother on any one of these points? *have it to thyself before God.* God’s word is the rule of faith, and judge of controversy. Appeal to the law and to the testimony of God’s word. You stand or fall by that, and not by the good opinion of your Church as to its soundness.

Have it to thyself before God. Do not set it up as the standard for the faith of others. You must give account of it to God. You believe for yourself and for no one else, nor can any one else believe for you. You can have no interest in being deceived yourself, nor in deceiving others. Be sure, therefore, that you are built upon Christ, the sure foundation, other than which no man can lay, and that you have built thereon something better than wood, hay, and stubble.

But you may say, you are willing that your Christian brethren may differ from you on these points, but that you cannot sacrifice principle, by receiving them into your Church. We answer, that by refusing them membership in your Church, you sacrifice a still greater principle, the principle of

Christian forbearance. The question for you to decide in this case is this: Is it better for me to sacrifice my own private opinion in a matter of no vital importance, or to sacrifice the principle of Christian forbearance, and thereby also sacrifice the unity of the Church? The goodness, long-suffering, and forbearance of God, lead thee to repentance and reconciliation with himself. Now take this example and act upon it, and see how it may operate upon thy weak or erring brother. We are quite sure you will succeed better in bringing his views, feelings, and practice into harmony with yours, by receiving him and treating him as a brother, than by rejecting him. You must not forget that forbearance and forgiveness are the legitimate fruits of true love to God and man, and that their daily and constant exercise will greatly increase your love, and strengthen the bond of union.

O, when will Christians truly and deeply feel that the Church *must be united*? Then will they begin to pray and seek for it in earnest. As each step is taken in this great work, God will open the way for another, and still another, until the shouting hosts of God's returning Israel shall come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. How cordial and happy the mutual greetings of ministers and brethren, when, in the fulness of perfect love, they give each other the right hand of fellowship, one saying to another, "What a wonder and pity it is, that differences of such small moment should have kept us apart so long! And now that by the

grace of God and the love of Christ we have come together, let the remembrance of the long and bitter past prepare us to place a higher value upon the unity of the Church."

What divine unction and power would we see and feel in the ministry of the united Church! What multitudes of weeping, rejoicing converts would crowd the gates of Zion! With what joy and gladness the nations of the earth, and the islands of the seas, would flock to the standard of the cross of Christ! Our God would "rend the heavens and come down; the mountains would flow down at his presence, as the melting fire that burneth!" Let no one say, the work is too great for us to hope for. What! a work too great for Omnipotence? a work he has promised—his Son died upon the cross to accomplish—a work for which the Church and the gospel ministry were instituted, and for which they have been praying, and laboring, and giving (with too little faith) for eighteen hundred years!

It is too great for a divided, weak, and unbelieving Church to accomplish. Let us, therefore, try the virtue of a divine and Heaven-constituted unity, and come forth to glorious battle in the name of the Lord of Hosts. "And it shall come to pass that while they are yet speaking, (in prayer,) I will hear, saith the Lord." "Bring all your tithes and offerings into my storehouse, saith the Lord, and prove me now herewith, and see if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing,

that there shall not be room enough to contain it." "Then shall they say, The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." "Now unto him that is able to do abundantly, above all that we can ask or think, be glory and dominion for ever." The Church thus united will be "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."

Do you ask how it is possible for the Churches, now so jealous of each other's power, so full of selfishness and sectarian pride, so divided, and each so determined that his *particular* Church must gain the conquest of the world, can be brought into one united Christian brotherhood—one Church? We answer, "By the effectual working of His mighty power, by which He is able to subdue all things unto himself." God can do it. *He will do it.* He can do it, by letting the enemies of the Church loose upon her scattered forces with fire and sword, and thus make the wrath of man praise him; or, these scattered forces of the Church may come together, repenting in dust and ashes, and crying mightily in prayer to God for help. Then it will come with great power, and it may come very quickly. The work may be cut short in righteousness, and that which many of us have said it will require many years of toil and labor to accomplish, may be done as quickly as the earthquake's tread awakes the slumbering nations.

Shall we with willing hearts come together, and ask God's help to heal the breaches in Zion, or will we sit still until the outside pressure of our enemies

shall drive us into each other's fraternal embrace? The choice is with us, and the responsibility is upon us.

The following rules for restoring and preserving the unity of the Church, (in the 15th chapter of Romans,) show that the apostle Paul felt the deepest interest in it, and that he shunned not on this, as all other doctrines and duties, to declare the whole counsel of God. Verse 1: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2. Let every one of us please his neighbor for *his* good to edification." The example: 3. "For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me." 5. "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with *one mind* and *one mouth* glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." What an example! The Christian need but ask himself how Christ received him; how sinful, and how utterly unworthy of such mercy and forgiveness! Then look at the motive which prompts this love of Christ in receiving the weakest believer—to *the glory of God*. Can we not for the love of Christ and the glory of God receive our weak brethren, bear their burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ? "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary

to the doctrine which ye have learned; and *avoid them*. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." Rom. xvi. 17, 18. What a chapter might be written upon these two verses! What admonition and rebuke to the lovers of controversy! *Mark* them that cause division, and *avoid them*. Why? because they serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but themselves. Division is here expressly stated to be contrary to the doctrine of Christ. It is a sin, a great sin against the Head and the body of the Church, and he that causes, abets, or encourages it, is to be avoided as a selfish and wicked heretic. And yet many of our dear brethren become restive and feverish with excitement, if we intimate that divisions in the Church are sinful and wicked. How shall we account for this? Is it true that the long-established usages of Protestant Churches (over two hundred years) have fixed in the minds of these brethren the lawfulness of division? And must it come to this among our Protestant Churches, that they will place more value on the usages and traditions of the fathers than upon the law of Christ? We confess we are alarmed for the spiritual state of any intelligent minister of the gospel who can set up an apology for divisions in the Church, in the middle of the nineteenth century. There must be a deep and scriptural conviction of the sin of division in the Church, before we can take one step

toward removing it. This (as with the writer) it may require years of earnest and prayerful study of the Scriptures to accomplish. And if this volume shall contribute any thing toward stirring inquiry and investigation on this subject, the writer will have gained the highest satisfaction.

24th verse. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE FIRST TO THE TWELFTH CHAPTER OF FIRST
CORINTHIANS.

“UNTO the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. i. 2, 3.

This salutation is not addressed to the church at Corinth only, but to all that in *every place* call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Cor. i. 10. What shall we call those separate organizations of professed Christians, in which each has its own ministry, its distinctive doctrines, government, ritual, mode of worship, and its plan of operations? If they are not

divisions, pray what will we call them? What will constitute division, if these do not?

In many instances the separation is so entire and complete, that they have no Christian fellowship—not even an outward recognition of each other. They have no communion at the Lord's table, nor exchange of pulpit labors. Each unchurches the other, and yet, in their zeal to make proselytes and to build up numerical strength, they will gladly take in the converts of each other's revival meetings, as the fruits of a genuine work of grace. Call them what we may, they are what the word of God prohibits as a violation of the constitutional unity of the Church—a schism in the body of Christ—and therefore sinful and wicked in the sight of God.

It may not be said of any one Church, that it has done all in its power to prevent separation; nor can it be said of any, that they have done all in their power to heal the breaches in Zion. In both these respects it is our duty to make confession of sin, both for ourselves and our fathers, and supplicate God's mercy and forgiveness. No doctrine is more clearly and forcibly taught in the Bible than the unity of the Church; nor is there any evil more clearly prohibited, as full of danger to the very existence of the Church, than divisions. “That there be no divisions among you—no divisions of whatever sort—mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ, and avoid them; they serve not Christ, but themselves.”

“A house divided against itself cannot stand.” As division is full of evil and disaster to the Church, so is union full of hope to the Church, and of blessing to the world.

Had Paul been an apologist for divisions in the Church, as a few rabid sectarians of our times are, he might have led the way by forming a large party of Paulites at Corinth; for, in their ignorant, carnal, and contentious state, they were quite ripe for such a movement. Some were for Paul, some for Apollos, some for Cephas, and some for Christ; and as Paul was the first and Christ the last named among the four favorites, it is likely that Paul had the largest and Christ the smallest number of admirers. But he alike condemns them all as carnal and schismatical. “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” 1 Cor. i. 13. Then may you divide. Then may you give a part of the glory which belongs to Christ alone, to Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. “He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” 1 Cor. i. 31. The glory of Christ is obscured and tarnished by an idolatrous veneration for the names of men, and the supreme authority of the word of God is weakened by a false estimation of the power of human reason.

Whether unwittingly or otherwise, it is a gross error that the writings of men, however learned and pious, are necessary to make the word of God sufficiently plain as the rule of faith and practice, and the judge of controversy. An overweening confidence in creeds and confessions of faith, as adopted

to hold religious sects together, is gradually undermining the power and authority of the word of God, and, in the same ratio, is weakening the vital power of Christianity. This tendency, as plainly seen in the general aspects of Christendom, is leading the schools of philosophy to ignore the Divine authority of the Bible, and substitute in its stead human reason, as an infallible guide to duty and happiness. The impartial reader of history knows that Voltaire and his coadjutors could never have sown the seed or gained the triumph for infidelity in France which they did, but for the low and corrupted state of religion in the Roman Catholic Church. The same influences are now leading Germany and other countries of Europe into rationalism and many other grosser forms of infidelity. And it must not be concealed that the same influences are gradually multiplying weak and ephemeral sects in the United States which virtually repudiate the Holy Bible, by teaching that "certain portions of it are obsolete," that other portions of it are not compatible with human reason, and therefore cannot be believed. Other sects are ingrafting in their religion Spiritualism, Free-loveism, Mormonism, and other forms of error, by which crime and licentiousness of every shade are baptized in the name of religion. Tell us not that these corruptions and absurdities could live and thrive in the light of a *pure, spiritual, and powerful Christianity*.

Brethren, our pulpits and churches need the bap-

tism of God's Spirit. We must take up the stumbling-blocks, we must "mark and avoid them which cause divisions and offences" in our ranks. We must go to work in earnest in the name of the Lord, and remove the partition-walls that now separate us. Let the word and Spirit of God point out the path of duty; and knowing our duty, let us resolve, in the name and strength of the Lord, we will do it. Let no one say it is impossible. With God all things (duties) are possible. Let us help ourselves, help one another, and God will work mightily in us, supplying all needed help and strength to do his will.

We cannot tell if God may not be at this time stirring the hearts of his ministers and people in Europe and this country to seek, by prayer and earnest Christian efforts, to restore the unity of the Church of Christ. While Robert Hall of England and John Mason of New York, both eminent servants of God, and highly distinguished for their learning and piety, were both engaged at the same time writing an argument on open or free communion, neither of them knew what the other was doing. But God knew, and helped them. Though now dead, they yet speak; and although each rendered himself unpopular with his own Church, they have thrown the Divine leaven of truth and love into the Churches, which has been working, and will work, by the blessing of God, until the whole Church is leavened.

"For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is

among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers (servants) by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. "So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." 1 Cor. iii. 3-9.

Though I plant early and late with tears, I am nothing. God is all in all, without whose increase, my planting and Apollos's watering could avail nothing. How little, ay, *nothing*, these servants of God took to themselves, and how much, ay, *all*, they ascribed to the grace of God! Yet, as God's husbandry, God's building, they were all one. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Verse 11. "Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he

himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." 1 Cor. iii. 12-15.

The "husbandry," "building," "temple" of God is *one*, and has *one* foundation. The beauty, symmetry, and durability of it, as the work of God, must depend upon the perfect unity and adaptedness of all its parts and its materials. God's work is perfect.

"Therefore let no man glory in men; for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. iii. 21-23.

What a rich legacy had the humblest believer in Christ, in the united Church! The Bible, with all its doctrines, precepts, and promises; the Church, with all its ordinances, ministers, and members; the world, with all its physical, intellectual, and moral wealth; life, with all its social, civil, and religious advantages; death, having lost its sting, is the doorway to eternal life; things present, and things unutterable and inconceivable to come; Christ, and heaven—all are yours!

O how Christians now-a-days, under the narrowness of sectarian views and feelings, stint themselves by saying, "This is *my* Church—*my* minister! I can't go to *your* Church, for your minister abuses and ridicules our Church." Even little children drink in these sectarian prejudices, as they do their mother's milk. They grow with their

growth, and strengthen with their strength, and become fixed and engraven in the very heart and being. No wonder such grown-up children feel at first an instinctive resistance to our "Plea for Christian Union." They will regard it as a new doctrine, though it is as old as the Bible. They will pronounce us disloyal to our own Church, and a disturber of its peace—a speculative visionary, sowing to the whirlwind and reaping the tempest. Well, be it so. Without regard to the wind, the tempest, or the cloud, we will "sow the seed in the morning, and withhold not our hand in the evening; not knowing whether this or that shall prosper, or whether both shall not be alike prosperous." We have the consolation to know that we write for God, for his Church, for eternity; and that although we may be regarded by a few bigots in the light of an innovator, we will find many liberal souls, warm hearts, and strong hands, to second and encourage any prudent and scriptural efforts to restore the unity, strength, and beauty of the Church of Christ. We rejoice to leave the event of our success in the hands of God. "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." 1 Cor. v. 8. "If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." 1 Cor. v. 11. Here we have a rule of Divine authority, by which the Church is to determine who

shall or shall not be admitted to the fellowship of the saints, in the holy feast of the Lord's Supper. This rule has reference to *practice, moral character*—and not to what the “man that is called a brother” *believes*, or professes to believe. It must not be forgotten that the tests of Christian character and fellowship, everywhere found in the Bible, are *practical*, and not theoretical. See the next chapter, (6th,) throughout as furnishing explicit rules for maintaining the peace and purity of the Church of Christ—rules overlooked by the Churches at the present time. “But when ye so sin against the brethren and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth.” 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13. This example of self-denial for the peace of the Church is worthy of all imitation. “For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.” 1 Cor. x. 17. The Church, consisting of many members, however diversified in gifts, talents, and endowments, by virtue of their union to Christ, are *one* bread and *one* body, with him and in him. How natural, therefore, that they should “all be partakers of that *one* bread,” in the holy communion of the Lord's Supper! Here is undoubted authority for the free and universal communion of all true believers in Christ, in the fellowship of Divine worship, and in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Not to eat with those who profess to be brethren, we must have positive evi-

dence that they are either "fornicators, covetous, idolaters, railers, drunkards, or extortioners," or otherwise immoral and unchristian in their deportment. By their *fruits*—not by their names—ye shall know them. Even if they be "weak in the faith, we must receive them," "as God for Christ's sake hath received us." How else can we strengthen and conform them to the true faith and spirit of our blessed Lord and Master? By rejecting them and separating from them, by party lines and walls of division, we cut off all means and opportunities of assimilating them to ourselves in faith and spirit. Suppose we *do* differ in regard to points confessedly not essential to salvation: is that difference less sinful in a separate than it would be in the same Church? Is it not far more probable that, by often meeting together and exchanging sympathies in the prayers and praises of the same holy altar, these differences would gradually die away and be forgotten, or only be remembered to the praise of that excellent charity which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things—which never faileth? Are not these differences greatly magnified by the separation, less reconcilable, and more offensive to the world? Would not the restoration of the Church to visible unity and love, notwithstanding the diversity of gifts and differences of opinion, demonstrate to all beholders the power and excellence of those divine virtues, forgiveness, forbearance, and charity, which are both the fruits and the evidences of pure religion—

love to God and man? O brethren, if the world could see this demonstration of our holy religion in a practical, vital unity in our name, ministry, and worship, the gates of Zion would soon be crowded with weeping, happy converts! Suppose every member of the true Church of Christ were to cry out in earnest longings of soul, *O God! we must have union! The world cannot believe without it! We cannot rest until it comes!* Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ prayed for it more than once in his last and memorable prayer for his Church, just before he went into the garden of agony, and sweat, and blood, and just before he went to the cross of crucifixion and expiation for our sins! O God, our hearts faint with holy desire for its speedy coming! We are filled with repentance and shame at the remembrance of the evils of the bitter past.

O God, forgive, as we forgive,
And let thy peace within us live;
In heart and life, O make us one;
In heaven and earth thy will be done.

All nations then shall flow to thee,
As streams and rivers to the sea;
Heaven's high arches then shall ring,
Christ over heaven and earth is King.

Hark how the angels shout and sing!
Earth shall a joyful tribute bring!
All nations own his rightful reign,
And angels shout the loud Amen!

The ransomed of the Lord shall come
To Zion, with a joyful song;
With garments of salvation dressed,
And leaning on their Saviour's breast.

He then that counts her converts true,
May count the drops of morning dew:
They come as clouds on flying wing;
They crowd her courts, they shout, they sing.

The lion with the ox shall feed;
A little child shall both them lead;
The tiger and the lamb lie down
In peace, because the curse is gone.

There shall be no more war nor curse,
For sin is vanquished by the Cross;
The olive branch of peace unfurled,
Whose magic power shall bless the world.

In heaven the glorious shout is heard—
Kingdoms of earth are thine, O Lord!
The earth shouts back the gladsome sound;
The heavens reflect it to the ground.

Thy name, thy fold, thy Church is *one*;
Thy will in heaven and earth is done.
Lord Jesus, come! O quickly come!
And claim the nations as thine own!

All glory to the King of kings!
Heaven with the glorious anthem rings:
God's law is honored and maintained—
The righteous saved—the wicked damned!

What pious heart in all Christendom would not rejoice to join in a world's prayer-meeting for union? What Church on earth would not seek a representation of its ministers and laymen in a meeting for prayer that the kingdom of God might come in all its plenitude and power? A congress of all Christian nations, holding sweet counsel together, negotiating peace in the name of the Prince of Peace, lifting up the heart and voice in prayer and praise

together, each seeking to make the *few* small points of difference subordinate to the *many* and great points of agreement and harmony, with a view to the adoption of a few great principles of religious faith as a platform of union, on which every converted man on earth might stand.

Who can doubt that on such a meeting, in the right spirit, the New Jerusalem from God out of heaven would come down upon earth? In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the might of God's Holy Spirit, such an effort could not fail to bring much honor and strength to the cause of true religion, and much good to the world lying in wickedness. O, if all the people of God would make it a subject of daily prayer that God would, by his word and Spirit and providence, open the way before his people, and incite them to take scriptural steps to restore unity and peace to the scattered hosts of Zion, soon would the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and the earth be filled with his glory. The time is short. The judgment is near. Souls are perishing for the bread of life. The business of the King requires haste. What we do must be done quickly.

Our God will help us, and that right early. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM TWELFTH CHAPTER OF FIRST CORINTHIANS TO
THIRD CHAPTER OF EPHESIANS.

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gen-

tiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit; for the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set every one of the members in the body as it hath pleased him; and if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor, again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; for our comely parts have no need; but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church: first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; third-

ly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts. And yet show I unto you a more excellent way." 1 Cor. xii. 4, to the end.

This analogical argument for the unity of the Church of Christ is inimitably sublime and beautiful, and unsurpassed in its pertinence and force. An uninspired pen may well hesitate to paraphrase it. As in the natural, so in the moral world, we everywhere see diversity in unity and unity in diversity, each adding the charm of beauty, interest, and instructiveness to the other.

Were the mountains, hills, and vales, the rivers, lakes, and seas, the trees, leaves, and flowers, the fishes, birds, and animals, the clouds and starry heavens all exactly alike, the constant monotony would tire the eye with its dulness, and afford little pleasure to the contemplative mind. Variety is the spice of life, and unity is the honey of life. Looking upon the face of the heavens, the earth, and ocean, infinitely diversified, and yet perfectly harmonious, "the eye is never tired with seeing," the "ear with hearing," nor the mind in contemplating. Though "one star differeth from another star in glory," in magnitude, time and distance of revolution, or in its more brilliant appearance, who supposes for a moment that there is any want of unity

in their movements, or in the services they perform for their great Creator?

Diversity is no disparagement to unity. There is perhaps as great diversity in the capacities, gifts, and talents of angels and archangels as in the members of the Church on earth, yet there is no want of unity in heaven.

“Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” And he *did* teach them how to pray: “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” In nothing can our resemblance to heaven be more pleasing to our Divine Lord and Master than in our perfect unity. We will certainly take nothing of our sectarian differences with us to heaven. We can have no use for them there, and they serve us no purpose here, but to make us unlike heaven. The free, united, and happy worship of heaven will be a great change to the rigid, exclusive, and bigoted sectarian. He may question whether he will not feel awkward at his first entrance into heaven, to find those whom he had excluded from the communion and fellowship of the Church on earth as near the throne of God and as holy and happy as he. It would seem, in any view of this case, that mutual apologies must be exchanged before every thing could be right, and free, and easy. Would it not be better for us to make these apologies now, so that all may be right, and free, and easy before we enter heaven? Would we not be better prepared for heaven?

Come, dear Christian brethren, there is no doc-

trine or duty in the whole system of Bible truth, essential to salvation, in which we cannot be united and agreed. God requires it of us; we must therefore do it. It will not do for us to say, we cannot do it; this would impeach the Divine veracity, and invalidate the authority of His word. We must believe God and obey him; then he will give us power to stretch forth the withered arm.

It may be asked, How shall we settle the question of Church government? See 1 Cor. xii. 5, which we have just read. "There are differences of administrations, but the same Lord." Is it not here taught that the form of Church government may differ to suit the different localities or civil governments, in which it may exist? Many pious and learned men in our different Churches now agree that no one mode of Church government is specifically taught in the word of God: that it was left an open question by the great Head of the Church, to afford convenience of adaptation to the different forms of civil government in which the Church might exist. For instance, the Presbyterian or Congregational mode of Church government would not be acceptable in an absolute monarchy.

A second, and perhaps the better reason for its being left open to the choice of the Church in different locations, is, that it furnishes an occasion for the exercise of those excellent graces, *liberty* and *forbearance*.

If we cannot all adopt the same form of Church

government, we can at least allow each other the liberty of choosing such forms as may be most convenient. We can, and must, for the sake of union, make this, and all other minor points of honest difference, *subordinate* to it.

The mode of baptism too, about which books have been written without end, and which has divided and distracted the Church for centuries, may be finally settled and disposed of in the same way. Indeed, as yet, we see not how else it can be settled. Many men on both sides, equally honest, learned, and pious, have taken different views of the subject; yet it is to-day as far, perhaps farther from being settled than ever before. If it be true, (which many learned and good men now believe,) that this too was designedly left by Christ as an open question, then there need be no more quarrel about it. Every brother, and every local church, has the liberty to choose for him or themselves such mode as may secure "the answer of a good conscience before God," and every other brother and every other church will forbear, and not judge or condemn him or them on that account. We are free to confess our preference for a certain mode, but at the same time we are happy to receive and fellowship our dear brethren who prefer a different mode.

There is no specific, exclusive mode set forth in the Bible. There are passages favoring more than one mode, and therefore the Church may choose

such mode as may be most compatible with their views of what is taught in the word of God, or most convenient to their local circumstances.

“If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;” for “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Here we can agree and unite, by making the few and unimportant points in which we differ, subordinate to the many and great points in which we are now united.

There is no scriptural reason why we should not be united, since we are baptized by *one* Spirit into *one* body, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. God hath set the members and tempered the body together, having given more honor to the feeble and less comely members, that there should be no *schism* in the body, but that all the members should have the same care one for another—mutual dependence, sympathy, and unity. Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Can this happy state of things exist truly of those who are shut out from each other’s communion and fellowship by high and strong partition walls, and who are constantly and jealously watching each other’s movements, lest one should get the advantage of the other? It was said of the primitive united Church by their enemies, “See how these Christians *love* one another!” But *now*, (O, shame that it should be said!) our enemies in many instances say, “Behold how these Christians *hate* one another!” We

speak that which we know, and testify of that which we have seen. How unnatural and wicked, if the eye, the ear, the hands or feet, should seek a quarrel with the other members of the body, and separate from them! How we should grieve to witness a scene like this! Even so unnatural and wicked is it for members of the body of Christ to quarrel and divide. Even so is the Saviour wounded in the house of his friends, and the Spirit grieved away from the Church, by those strifes and bitter controversies which have divided and scattered her members.

Paul having in this chapter illustrated and enforced the doctrine of the unity of the Church, he proceeds in the 13th chapter to show how it is to be maintained and perpetuated.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Verses 1-3. Here the apostle supposes that he might have all conceivable eloquence, knowledge, *all* knowledge, *all* faith, *all* liberality, and *all* zeal, so that he would give all his goods to feed the poor, and even his body to be burned, yet he would be nothing and profited nothing,

without love. Nothing can supply the place of this excellent grace. Why so? Because it is the bond of perfectness—the bond of union. It gives life, and power, and beauty to every other grace, and every other creature in the universe. It is the beginning and the end of all true religion. It is all in all of Christianity. It is all of heaven—the grand aggregate of the Godhead, for God is love.

“Charity (better read it *love*) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” 1 Cor. xiii. 4–8. That is, the use of prophecies and miracles will come to an end, but charity will live for ever and ever. “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” 1 Cor. xiii. 13. We need not assure the reader that the understanding, possession, and practice of this heavenly virtue, in all the public and private duties and relations of life, would insure the Church of Christ against divisions and contentions for ever.

“Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. i. 3.
“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of

good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints salute you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." 2 Cor. xiii. 11-14. Thus opens and closes the salutation and benediction of that faithful servant of God to the Church which he had planted at Corinth.

"All the brethren which are with me, unto the Churches of Galatia: grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ." Gal. i. 2, 3. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, (that is, in the Church they are both equal, and have like privileges to the ordinances of the Church,) for ye are all one in Christ." Gal. iii. 27, 28. How fully, repeatedly, and explicitly did Paul teach all the Churches in all his Epistles the doctrine of unity! "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Gal. v. 14, 15.

The following are some of the works of the flesh: (Division,) hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, revilings, etc. Gal. v. 20, 21. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness,

faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." Gal. v. 22, 23. No law to condemn, no law to divide.

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one, in the spirit of meekness; bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Gal. vi. 1, 2. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; even in him." Eph. i. 10. All things, all angels, all saints, all holy beings in heaven and earth, to be gathered together in *one*, in Christ. The capacity of Christ to contain all things cannot be doubted, since "the fulness of the Godhead bodily dwells in him." The Church, heaven, eternity, are all in Christ. What a Saviour we have! How unspeakably happy when we shall *all* find ourselves one Church, gathered together in him!

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto *all the saints*, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him who filleth all in all." Eph. i. 13-23.

"But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain *one new man*, (Church,) so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in *one* body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by *one* Spirit unto the Father. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and

of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of the Spirit." Eph. ii. 13-22. By the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles was broken down; by it the enmity so bitter and long existing between them was slain; by it the two were made one; by it they had access by one Spirit unto the Father; by it they were no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; by it they were a holy temple in the Lord, fitly framed together, and built upon a sure foundation, of which Christ is the chief corner-stone. The partition wall separating between the Jews and Gentiles consisted in a "law of commandments contained in ordinances." With these same materials Protestant Christendom has been for the last two hundred years building up those same partition walls between themselves, which the crucifixion of Christ and the power of Divine grace had demolished and broken down. Is it not a fearful thought that Christ's own professed friends and disciples—sent to preach the gospel to every creature—sent "to gather together in one" the children of God scattered abroad, that there might be one fold, one household, one temple, and one Church—should be employed in scattering the flock of Christ, and then building walls of par-

tion to keep them apart! Brethren, we ask, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, can you, with sacrilegious hands, build up that which your blessed Lord and Master has broken down at such immense sacrifice and suffering? Can you thus repudiate his mission, tarnish the glory of his cross, and nullify his death? Take care, dear brethren, "lest we be found (in this thing) fighting against God." "For these divisions (of the Church of Christ) there must be great searchings of heart." "There is an Achan in the camp—(the Church;) a wedge of gold—a Babylonish garment." The accursed thing must be removed. The stumbling-block must be taken up. The Church must be humbled with repentance in sackcloth and ashes before God. It may be said truly of division in the Church, "This kind (of sin) goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Better, brethren, infinitely better that it should go out by prayer and fasting than that it should go out by fire and sword. Go out it will, go out it must, or the Church go out. Suppose, brethren, as it is proposed by Rev. Dr. Lewis, of Brooklyn, L. I., and other distinguished servants of God, both in Europe and this country, that a Christian congress of all nations be called, to say whether the Church must be united, and, if so, to set apart a few days, or a week, to be devoted in prayer, fasting, and searching the Scriptures, specially in reference to the divisions of the Church: would not Jesus, our great High-Priest, whose infinitely benevolent heart is touched with the feel-

ing of our infirmities, look approvingly upon the whole family of believers—his own dear children—all at the same time prostrate before the throne of grace, supplicating in tears, in penitence and faith, the restoration of unity, love, and peace to the Church of God?

The God of our salvation, who turneth the clouds and the winds whithersoever he will, would turn again his people as the streams of the south. He would fill their mouth with laughter and their tongues with singing. The unbelieving world would say, "The Lord hath done great things for them. Then should they also answer and say, The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

After such a season of prayer and humiliation before God—a season of sweet counsel and fraternal interchange with Christian brethren everywhere—no doubt the providence of God would open the way for another step. It might be suggested that a delegation from all evangelical denominations of Protestant Christendom be appointed to meet at London, or New York, to digest a plan of union, upon a platform no larger or wider than the Bible, and certainly no less. They might agree upon a simple declaration of the faith and unity of the Church of Christ in the language of the Bible, without note or comment.

They also might agree upon a short Church ritual and form of prayer, for public and private worship, both of which should be written in the *very words*

of the Holy Bible, and without note or comment. It might be left to the choice of individual churches to use or not use such ritual and form of prayer. The questions of psalmody, choirs, and organs in the worship of God might also be left to the choice of individual and local churches. The modes of worship, government, or discipline, and of baptism, might be left in the same way, for, as the Holy Bible teaches, we shall need the exercise of the largest *liberty*, and *charity*, and *forbearance*.

As to our creeds and confessions of faith, and our commentaries—partition walls—we can hold them as private property, in our private libraries, strictly subordinate to the word of God, and of no Divine authority in the Church of Christ.

As to the doctrine of election, we can all agree to “give all diligence to make our own (personal) election sure.” As to the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints, we can all agree to persevere and “believe to the saving of the soul.” As to the mode of Church government, we can all agree that Christ shall be King in Zion.

Not the least important plank in the platform of the united Church might be as follows:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Cor. i. 10.

There is no doubt that at this moment the Christian world is preparing to see some prudent and

more effective steps taken to restore union in the ranks of Zion. But each denomination, perhaps through pride or prejudice, hesitates to make the overture for union to any other, fearing that it might be regarded as a concession of its weakness or its sin in the matter of separation. Each professes that reconciliation is desirable, but neither has the Christian magnanimity to propose it.

Illustration: Two brethren—near neighbors—both esteemed as good men, had a very serious quarrel. Every effort was employed by the church and by personal friends to reconcile them, but all failed. Several years passed away, each refusing to speak to the other. In the meantime, a general religious interest was awakened in the church. Each of them became more and more unhappy under this separation. At length one of them determined, at the first opportunity, he would offer the hand of reconciliation. On meeting his brother, he said to him, "I feel it to be my duty to offer you the hand of reconciliation." His brother replied, "I feel it to be my duty to accept it, on certain conditions." Said the first, "What are the conditions?" Said the second, "They are, that, for ever hereafter, you are to be regarded as the best man and the best Christian." "Well," said the first, "I am unworthy of any such distinction, but will do my best to act in a way to merit your esteem and confidence." "All right," said the second; "let us not think of the bitter past, except to make us value peace more highly in the future."

The conduct of each was noble, especially of him who made the first overture for peace. Thus it ought to be regarded with that Church that makes the first overture for union: thus it will be by all liberal and right-minded men.

The reader must indulge us, if we occasionally protract our remarks on those beautiful texts of Scripture, which open such vast fields of thought. O that we had the power to awaken a new and deeper interest in their prayerful and daily study, a clearer understanding and higher appreciation of their holy teachings! "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE FOURTH CHAPTER OF EPHESIANS TO THE
FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

“I THEREFORE, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” The unity of the Spirit in the *bond* of peace—not *bonds* of peace. There is but one *bond* of peace for the Church, that is the Bible. None but the Bible can hold us together and bind Satan. The creeds and confessions of faith substituted by separate denominations as bonds of union and of peace, to hold them together, are too short, and quite too weak, to bind the old serpent, the devil. There are some good links in the bonds or chains held by each denomination, which, if brought together, would make “the great chain” long and strong enough to bind Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit. In our divided state, we have not strength to resist or convert the Papal, Pagan, or infidel powers, constantly making war upon us.

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Eph. iv. 4-6. Here, dear brethren, as everywhere taught in the word of God, we have *one* calling, *one* hope, *one* body, *one* Spirit, *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism. With regard to *one* faith and *one* baptism, about which there has been so much controversy, there should be the same unity and agreement as in the other points. If the *one* faith here refers to the system of doctrines and duties taught in the Holy Scriptures, we can have unity in this faith. Or if it refers to that act of the understanding and heart, by which we receive Christ as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—faith that saves the soul—we can have unity in this faith also. There is *one* faith, *only* one faith that justifies and saves the soul. This faith is common to all true Christians.

If the *one* baptism here referred to is the baptism of the Spirit, by which all are united in *one* body, (Church,) and by which we are all made to drink into *one* Spirit, then there can be no trouble to obtain unity in this. Or if it refers to water, which is the outward sign and representation of spiritual baptism, then there can be no trouble here, except it be about the *mode* of administering and receiving it; and *even this* can be settled most happily by the laws of *liberty, forbearance, and charity*. This is the proper scriptural method of settling all differences.

about peculiar doctrines and Church usages, which are not essential to salvation. The application of these Scripture laws in maintaining the unity of the Church, gives a better type of Christianity to the world, than if there were such perfect uniformity of sentiment, feeling, and opinion, as would require no use or application of these laws. Unity with diversity illustrates more the beauty and power of Christianity, than could be given without it. Let us decree in our hearts we must have unity, and in the name of the Lord seek after it.

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Eph. iv. 11–13. O, brethren, “the law of the Lord is perfect.” We need not stop to make long comments upon it, but rather let us go along and read it, and obey it.

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath

forgiven you." Eph. iv. 29-32. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." Eph. v. 1, 2. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Eph. v. 20, 21. Alas! how little of submitting or yielding in opinion and practice do we see in the opposing sects into which the Church is now divided! "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Eph. v. 30, 32. It shows, by the strongest figure of speech, the perfect and indissoluble union between Christ and the Church, and by consequence their union with one another. "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen." Eph. vi. 23, 24.

"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be

absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in *one* spirit, with *one* mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." Phil. i. 1-5, 27.

"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Phil. ii. 1-4. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings." Verse 14.

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, (Christ,) from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Col. ii. 18, 19.

In the Church, holding to Christ the Head, and held together by strong joints and bands, nourished and growing with the increase of God, "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if

any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Col. iii. 11-17.

"Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."

1 Thess. i. 1-3. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do to you." 1 Thess. iii. 12. "As touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia; but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own

hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing." 1 Thess. iv. 9-12.

"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophecies. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it. Brethren, pray for us. Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss. I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen." 1 Thess. v. 11-28.

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your-

selves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." 2 Thess. iii. 6. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." 2 Thess. iii. 10-15.

Question—Whether it would not be well for the Church in these times to revive that old "tradition," and "command" that if any man work not, neither shall he eat? Idleness leads to many other vices; hence it was that he that worked not became a busybody, and for these two sins he was excluded from the fellowship of the Church.

It was the aim of the apostles and primitive Church to make *practical* Christians, rather than theologians—*practical* rather than *theoretical* members. Idlers, "busybodies," "revilers," and even "railers," are tolerated in the Church now, if these rare endowments are only directed to build up a favorite sect, by proselyting, controversy, and abuse of other sects. This no doubt is one cause of the low standard of personal piety in our

Churches—"why so many are weak and sickly among us." Indeed, he that is most frequent and able in debate, most bitter and cutting in criticism, soon becomes the great favorite, ay, the oracle of his Church; while he that intimates only that these things ought not so to be, and cultivates kindly relations with other Churches, and urges the duty of a closer union with all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, is soon dropped, or pronounced disloyal to his own Church. This has been illustrated in many instances, such as Rev. Dr. John Mason, of New York, also Rev. Robert Hall, of England. But the future historian, as well as the future judgment of God Almighty, will vindicate the lives and labors of these excellent men. If the faithful watchman sees sin or the sword coming from any direction, even from his own Church, and blow not the trumpet of warning, he is not only disloyal to his *own* Church, but to the *whole* Church, and unfaithful to his God. His field is the world, and his mission is to preach the gospel to every creature.

"Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord. As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure

heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." 1 Tim. i. 2-7.

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii. 1-4.

"I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." 1 Tim. v. 21.

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." 1

Tim. vi. 3-5. How deeply solemn the charge to Timothy, and, by consequence, to all gospel ministers, to be faithful in all the high and holy functions of their office, not preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality, teaching in plain, *wholesome words*, even the *words of the Lord Jesus*

Christ. No preaching is so effectual, saving, and powerful as that which is couched in the very "*words*" of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let all ministers of the gospel who love controversy, all who bring slavery, politics, and the speculations of human philosophy into the pulpit, read again the 4th and 5th verses of the 6th chapter of 1st Timothy. Just such proud, ignorant, doting, envious, strife-loving railers, evil surmisers, perverse disputers, have in every age brought trouble and division into the Church. They may even suppose that the gain (or money made) by their public controversies, or the printing and sale of the same, is godliness, and that they are doing God service by distracting the Church. "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. vi. 11, 12. "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing, have erred concerning the faith." 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21.

Men may differ and divide upon the opposing theories of natural science, moral ethics, and the science of politics, (for these are imperfect,) but they must not divide into factions and parties upon the plain and fundamental laws of the word of God, (for the law of the Lord is perfect.) Men may differ in opinion as to the details and methods of understanding religious truth, and also in regard to

the outward forms of religious worship, but they *must not divide into opposing sects*. First. Because such division magnifies the points of difference, and renders doctrinal harmony and true Christian fellowship utterly impracticable whilst such division exists. Second. Because it is a palpable violation of the word of God. Third. Because it repudiates the authority and disparages the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Fourth. Because it subverts the very foundation of Christian faith and obedience, and vitiates the fountain of moral feeling, from whence spring and grow those divine virtues, love, joy, peace, and unity, which constitute the very life and sweetness of Christian communion and fellowship. Fifth. Because it sets up an insuperable barrier to the spread of the gospel and the conversion of the world.

“Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.” 2 Tim. ii. 22–25. “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers

of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Tim. iii. 1-5.

What a lifelike picture of the times in which we now live! Is it possible that men possessing the traits of character here and elsewhere set forth in the word of God, may have the *form* of godliness, be members of the Church, preach, eat and drink in the house of the Lord, and even "boasters" of the wonders they have performed in the name of Christ, and yet be destitute of, as they deny the power of vital godliness? These epistles to Timothy should induce "great searching of heart" in those who assume the holy functions of the gospel ministry. Especially should those who love controversy, aid and abet in divisions, or apologize for the divisions of the Church, search their hearts with fear and trembling, lest with all their noise and zeal for the Church they should be found fighting against God, to whom it shall be said, (as they stand without, saying, "Lord, open unto us,") "Depart, ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you!"

"But evil men and seducers (in the Church) shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." 2 Tim. iii. 13. "I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will

come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." 2 Tim. iv. 1-5.

"To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour." Tit. i. 4.

This greeting is in the faith *common* to all the saints of God. In it, there is unity with all truly regenerate persons; but, on account of divisions, it is not recognized by them; nor is it visible to the world, and therefore it loses its power for good both in the Church and in the world. O God, give us eyes to see it, and hearts to feel it.

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, (justification by the grace of God, and hope of eternal life,) that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." Tit. iii. 8-10.

Heresy in this connection, as in most other cases, consists in foolish questions and genealogies, (tracing illustrious ancestors, or succession from some great man,) contentions and strivings about

the law, which were unprofitable and vain, denying "justification by the grace of God, and hope of eternal life," and perhaps mainly in not "maintaining good works."

The sticklers for the adoption of a particular creed of faith, as a condition of communion and fellowship in the Church, will perhaps be surprised to find no such conditions in the New Testament; but, uniformly, good works, a godly conversation, the manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, etc., are the tests of true discipleship and membership in the Church of Christ. The examination before the Church (if there was any) was not to learn how or what he *believed*, so much as to learn how he *lived*, and what he was willing to *do* for Christ.

"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Heb. ii. 11. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb. xii. 14.

"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons." James ii. 1. "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well; but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin." James ii. 8, 9. "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and

strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." James iii. 14-18.

Practical religion includes both negative and positive virtues, every public and private duty, and, as a whole, constitutes a most perfect and beautiful adorning of the human character. The concentration of the light and power of each member in the unity of the whole, would make the Church just what the Great Master designed—the light of the world.

"From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not from hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" James iv. 1. "Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speaking, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: to whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. ii. 1-5. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of dark-

ness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." 1 Pet. ii. 9-17.

Here is an instructive picture of a united Church, seeking no control or direction of the State, but submitting cheerfully to the authority of its officers, and rendering them due honors.

"That your prayers be not hindered." 1 Pet. iii. 7. If a slight interruption of the peaceful relations of husband and wife, as heirs together of the grace of life, may hinder their prayers, how may the want of love and peace hinder the prayers of God's dear children! "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."—David. "Leave thy gift at

the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”—Jesus. Our dear Christian brethren must look at this subject in the light of God’s holy truth. Something is the matter, else our prayers and offerings would have done more toward the world’s conversion. We may well ask whether the motives of our prayers and offerings have not been too selfish, too sectarian—vitiated by denominational pride. If so, the Lord will not hear; our offerings will be offensive to God.

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9. “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God, (not of men :) if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” 1 Pet. iv. 8–11.

O God, let these holy doctrines find a deep and permanent lodgment in our souls, that the radiations of their holy light and power may go out in

our lives. Let brotherly love continue, and increase more and more, until our souls are filled with all thy blessed fulness. Amen.

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

It is matter of rejoicing that these troubles and heresies did not divide the Church, but purified, strengthened, and united it. Even the sharp controversy between Paul and Peter created no schism in the Church. It is most refreshing to hear Peter, many years after his quarrel with Paul, speak of him in the following language: “Even as our *beloved brother Paul* also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you.” 2 Pet. iii. 15. These holy men of God felt the full force of the Divine obligation to maintain the unity of the Church, and therefore felt that they *must* forgive, forbear, and love one another. O that our dear brethren of all Christendom felt it as it is taught in the word of God, and acted in reference to it as did the brethren of primitive times! Then should our peace flow like a river. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN TO REVELATION.

“BUT if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Chap. i. 7. “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.” Chap. ii. 9–11. “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” Chap. iii. 10, 11. “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a

murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Verses 14, 15.

Here, dear brethren, is an awful test for divided and warring churches to be tried by. The simple question is, Are they God's dear children whom we reject and disown in the fellowship and worship of God's house? Does the Spirit of God dwell in them, and do they show the fruits of the Spirit in their lives? But we forbear. God send his own truth with power upon our hearts!

It is not enough for us to *say* we love those brethren who are separated from us and cut off from our communion; for the 18th verse says: "My little children, let us not love in *word*, neither in *tongue*, but in *deed* and in *truth*." "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." Chap. iv. 7. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." Verses 11-13. "God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." Verses 16, 17. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"

Verse 20. "And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also." Verse 21. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." Chap. v. 1, 2.

The tests of true Christian character, as set forth in the word of God, are few and very plain; so much so that he that runs may read them, and the fool—or weakest capacity—may not err therein. Indeed, all the tests may be resolved into one; namely, love to God and the children of God. "If ye love me," said Jesus, "ye will keep my commandments." Again, he said, "This is the love of God, that ye keep my commandments." True religion is love; God is love; heaven is love—perfect in love, and therefore perfect in bliss. Man is constituted to love, and therefore constituted to be happy. He that loves most is most happy. He that is most perfect in his love to God will be most perfect in his obedience to his commands, and most affectionate and tender in his love to all those that love God. If we love the brethren *in deed and in truth*, then we may know that we have passed from death unto life. If we love God, we may know that we love the brethren; and if we love the brethren, we may know that we love God. Here is an infallible rule that proves itself by working both ways. This is my commandment, says our

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that ye love one another.

Can any one doubt for a moment, after reading the testimony of the word of God as presented in this and the preceding chapters, that the Church of Christ was constituted *one and indivisible*, or that its perfect love depends upon its perfect unity? If so, it is our duty to go to work at once, and "take up the stumbling-blocks," remove the "walls of partition," and whatever other "let or hindrance" may be in the way of the perfect love and unity of the Church. Our blessed Lord and Saviour demands it at our hands, and has furnished in his holy word both the pattern of it and the means by which it is to be accomplished. He may well doubt his true allegiance to Christ who sits at ease in his own little narrow enclosure and says, I want unity, but it must come in *my* Church. It can never come whilst, in a hundred and one little sects, each one says, *Mine* must be the nucleus around which all must unite. Some will say Presbyterianism is the nucleus for union, some Episcopacy, some Congregationalism, some Apostolic Succession, some immersion, some sprinkling, and some the Pope of Rome; but all these shall go as the wood and hay and stubble before the brightness of His coming, the fire of whose love shall burn them up.

No, dear brethren, *Christ is the nucleus* of union. The *cross* is the *great central point* of attraction, around which the shouting hosts of God's united Church shall be gathered into one *loving brotherhood*.

Division is a great hindrance to love; therefore, division must be removed. Union is a great help and incentive to love; therefore, union must be restored. Cost, therefore, what it may of labor, prayer, repentance, sacrifice of self, of names and creeds of faith, we *must have union*. The Church cannot arise and shine without it. The world cannot believe in Christ and know the power of the gospel without it.

With a sense of its desirableness, and our duty to seek for it, it will be our pleasure to do any thing in our power to bring it to pass. All that is wanting is a full, earnest, unwavering trust in God, uncompromising and loving obedience to his word, and that we love one another as brethren.

Love will make the yoke of Jesus
 Light and easy to our necks;
 From the love of sin it frees us,
 And our evil passions checks.

Holy love, our souls uniting,
 Makes us like the saints above—
 Holy joy and peace exciting,
 Hail, all hail, almighty love!

By this love all men shall know us,
 And shall know the Saviour too;
 Brethren, let us love like Jesus,
 If to him our hearts are true.

Holy love, the bond of union,
 Makes us one in Christ our Lord;
 All in Christ have free communion,
 Founded on his holy word.

Cement of the Holy Temple,
Holding all its parts in one;
Fashioned after his example:
Each a polished, living stone.

Holy Bible, thou our platform—
Broad and strong enough for all—
Here we rest with holy freedom
On this rock we cannot fall.

Names and creeds, of man's formation,
Stood like separating walls,
Holding each denomination
Deaf to love's inviting calls.

Now I see them fall for ever,
Dagon-like, before the ark,
Never, never more to sever
Those who're joined in hand and heart.

“I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preëminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.” 3 John 9–11. Diotrephes was selfish, arbitrary, prating with malice against the disciples, refusing to receive some of the brethren, and casting others out of the Church—just such a man as in our times would draw a party after him, and divide

the Church. But this no one was allowed to do, or could do, in apostolic times.

A more specific description of the character of such men "as cause division and contentions" in the Church, is found in the Epistle of Jude, verse 16: "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, (selfishness;) and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, (very eloquent,) having men's persons in admiration (fulsome in flattery) because of advantage."

Now-a-days, since division is tolerated and legalized by custom, very slight causes may produce divisions: such as the control of church property, African slavery—a question belonging exclusively to the State—who shall be greatest. These, and other questions even less important, have distracted and divided the Church.

We have now presented to the reader, in their consecutive order, the principal texts of Holy Scripture in the New Testament which relate to the subject of Christian unity. Many more might have been added to the list, teaching by inference the same doctrine. The practical remarks interspersed through these readings of the word of God, are given as the promptings of the subject at the moment, and in language, manner, and spirit, as far as possible, conformable to the Holy Scriptures. Let them be read in the spirit of forbearance and charity. Let the *motive* and not the style of the author be the subject of your kind approval or sparing condemnation. And may the good Spirit of our

God so sanctify this interview between us, that, when we finish our work on earth, we may meet each other in heaven, each receiving the plaudit of Christ: "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord." Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN UNION—ITS OBLIGATION, AND THEREFORE
ITS PRACTICABILITY.

God is a unit. His laws, his works, both of creation and providence, are perfect in unity. Hence the teachings of revelation, and of nature as well, confirm and establish the doctrine of unity, as constituting the very basis of the wisdom, strength, and beauty of God's natural and moral universe. "All thy works praise thee, and thy saints bless thee."

Even the apologist for sects will not deny that the unity of the Church is clearly taught in the Bible, and that "divisions and contentions" are repeatedly and solemnly interdicted. How he reconciles his theory that the Bible teaches unity and prohibits division, and at the same time justifies the present divisions, strifes, and contentions, which are distracting the Church and offending the world, remains yet to be seen. It involves the gross absurdity that divisions are not divisions, or that the divisions now separating the Church are

not the divisions prohibited in the Bible. Or, secondly, it involves the still *grosser* absurdity that we may do evil that good may come: that is, we may divide and separate the Church into opposing sects for the sake of the good that will come from their conflicting interests, in the fuller development and wider spread of the gospel. These and other absurdities furnish the strongest proofs of the blinding influence of sectarianism, and the utter hopelessness of doing any thing to restore the unity of the Church, until this blindness is removed. Until then, we can neither feel the evil of division, repent of it, nor seek a remedy for it.

Shame might well flush the cheek of him who should attempt a scriptural vindication of the divisions of the Church. Thanks be to God, we have yet to see the first attempt of this kind. All that has been attempted by the most rigid sectarian is a *mere apology* for them, and this is very awkwardly done, as in the nature of the case it must be, when no "Thus saith the Lord" is or can be furnished to support it.

To all such we would say, in the spirit of kindness, forbearance, and Christian love, "Produce your cause; bring forth your strong reasons." "Come, let us reason together;" let us open our hearts with ingenuous kindness to the teachings of the word and Spirit of God. Let us be fully willing to be and to do whatever, and to go wherever these heavenly teachings shall lead us.

The testimony of the word of God, as presented

in the first part of this work, will not admit of a doubt as to the mind of the Spirit in regard to the perfect unity of the Church of Christ. Nor are we left in doubt as to the design of that unity, nor of the means by which it is to be maintained and preserved.

It might be supposed that a religion coming from God would confer upon man the highest perfection of which his moral nature was susceptible. Unity is an essential element of that perfection; therefore, unity must lie at the foundation of true religion. There is perfect unity in the persons, attributes, and perfections of the Godhead; unity in the name, the plans, and works of the holy persons of the Godhead, which is given in the word of God as the pattern and example of unity for the Church. This unity is represented by the human body, having many members filling different offices, but each member aiding and sympathizing with the others; by a flock of sheep, consisting of one fold and one shepherd; by the vine and its branches; by a house, a temple, a building, consisting of lively stones; a family, of which each member sustains the same relation to the other, and to the head; by an army of soldiers, commanded by one great Captain of salvation, and going forth under his leadership to make the conquest of the world to the faith and obedience of Christ. For testimony as to the nature of Christian unity, and the obligation to maintain and preserve it, the reader will refer to the first chapters of this

work; also to the prize essays by the Revs. Dr. Summers, Lewis, and others.

THE PRACTICABILITY OF UNION.

We desire to aid the meditations of the reader on this difficult part of our subject. The *difficulty* is not in the nature nor obligation of union, but in the *way* of attaining it. Even in *this*, the ingenuous heart must hesitate to admit that any duty God imposes is difficult. All the difficulties and disabilities on this subject lie in ourselves—our sin and unbelief—and we cannot reason ourselves out of them, half so easily as we can pray ourselves out. The best philosophy in the case of the man in the gospel with a withered arm, was to believe and obey Christ. If he had stopped to reason on the subject, to learn *how* it was possible for him to stretch forth his arm, it might have remained withered and lifeless at his side. But no, he believed Christ had a right to command, and the power to help him; he therefore made the effort, and succeeded.

Moses, at the head of the hosts of Israel at the Red Sea, did not stop to learn *how* they might go forward, but at the command of God they went forward, and were delivered. We must obey God, and leave the result of that obedience with him. God commands that his Church shall be *one*; that there “shall be no divisions among them.” It will not do for us to stop to inquire, with the cold speculations of human reason, *how* the Church, with so

many discordant elements, can possibly be united. If we determine that we *must* and *will* obey God in the use of the means he has appointed, God will do the work. We *can* and *must* obey. God *can* and *will* bless. The Church is sorely pressed by enemies without—infidelity, Romanism, and many forms of heresy and false religion. She is also troubled within, by selfishness, pride, envies, jealousies, strife, divisions, and consequently a weak and sickly membership. Withered, and cold, and dead as she is, the command is upon her. A sense of her enemies and troubles without and within, and her dependence upon God for help, should urge her to cry to God both day and night, until deliverance shall come. Union is impracticable, until the effort for it is made in the name of the Lord, and with appropriating faith in the exceeding great and precious promises of God.

If it is said, We are not prepared for it, (a shame and sin if it is so,) we are at least prepared for the effort, and cannot delay making it without accumulating guilt. We cannot tell what we can do until we *try*, nor can we tell what God may do for us, until we prove him with an acceptable offering. Our God will “do things for us which we looked not for.” He will “pour upon his Church a blessing which she has not room to contain.” “He will make her cup to run over. He will fill his house (Church) with glory.”

Brethren, the signs of the times clearly indicate that Providence is preparing the way for a successful

effort to unite the Church. The bitter experience of divisions and controversies, for two hundred years past, will prepare us to value more highly than ever the blessings of union and peace. Our beloved brethren, sent abroad as missionaries to the heathen nations, are ashamed of our divisions, and would gladly conceal the knowledge of them from the pagan nations. How often have they been met with the withering retort, "Agree amongst yourselves before you ask us to believe you, or to exchange our religion for yours."

O, if we now had union at home and abroad, with the doors of the world open before us as they have never been before; with talents, and wealth, and learning which the Church has never had before; with facilities for travel and interchange of national sympathies with all peoples, never enjoyed before; with the power of the printing-press, by which a flood of light is now pouring upon the world, and by which millions of copies of the word of God, without note or comment, may be yearly distributed among all nations; and with the readiness, ay, even the cries and earnest pantings of all nations for the gospel of Christ, and for civil and religious liberty; O, if we had union, love, and peace amongst ourselves, under all these advantageous circumstances, how soon the world would be converted to the faith of Christ! God's word and providence call us to it; the crying necessities of a world lying in sin and wickedness call for it; the divided and distracted state of the Church calls for

it; the prayers, and tears, and soul-pantings of thousands of the most pious and godly in all our Churches call for it. Let us seek it, let us have it, not in the mere outward form of ecclesiastical enactment, but in heart and life—in the spirit and power of the gospel of Christ. For there can be no outward, visible union, where there is no inward, spiritual union. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” If, therefore, the heart be right with God and our brethren, it will give visible manifestations in the life; it will prove itself as the fruit proves the quality of the tree. Some years ago, it was thought to be a liberal proposition, that Christians should “agree to disagree,” and go along and let each other alone. But *now* we must do even better than that: we must agree to agree; for to “agree to disagree” would be agreeing to sin, for it is a sin for Christians to disagree.

We may agree that every one whom the “Son hath made free,” shall have the right of private judgment of opinions; that if he “has faith, (differing in minor points from his brother,) he must have it to himself before God.” No man, however learned and pious he may be, has the right to lord it over the consciences of others, or to set up his faith or opinions as a standard for others, or for the Church. This is disparaging to the authority of God’s word, and the fruitful source of controversy and division in the Church. The pious and learned Augustin gave the following as the platform of union: “In all things essential, *unity*; in all things

not essential, *liberty*; and in *all* things *charity*." "Good men, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," in the ministry, and a membership of "peculiar people, zealous of good works," would form a substantial basis for union. A good heart and a good life, love to God and love to men, illustrated by "a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty," would be a satisfactory test of Christian character, and a passport to the communion and fellowship of the Church.

We should then look at the *character*, the *walk* and *conversation* of men and women—not to their ebullitions of passionate zeal for orthodoxy in *their* Church—for Bible tests of pure religion.

Our union, then, would be in *the common faith*, *the common salvation—a union in Christ*. Such a union of all pious persons would do much to crush out heresies, confound infidelity, put to silence the foolishness of gainsayers, reform the corruptions of Popery, and much, *very* much, to convert the Pagan and Mohammedan nations.

Dear brethren, our plea for Christian union is an earnest one. We may not live to see it consummated; we may do but little toward it; but if we can only excite inquiry and investigation, so as to bring our Christian brethren out for or against it, we shall have done much for the cause. Apathy and listless indifference are more to be dreaded than open hostility.

Ministers of the gospel must call the attention of their churches to it, and set it forth in the light

of Holy Scripture. Union meetings for prayer, now multiplying, and so signally blessed of God in the growing piety and charity of Churches, and the awakening and conversion of unbelievers, must be encouraged and multiplied still more and more. The private and public interchanges of brethren of different Churches must be tender, courteous, loving, with a view to conciliate by seeking the points of agreement, rather than the points about which they differ. Such interchanges, prudently conducted, would discover to Christians how many and vitally important are the points of mutual agreement and harmony between them, and also how few and unimportant the points about which they differ. They will love one another, and feel that they ought not to be separated. They will also inquire why they should not be united. They will be happy to act in concert in any prudent and scriptural steps to restore union, peace, and love in the Church of Christ. Religious controversies, now becoming stale, would soon die out, and the noble Christian emulation would be, Who shall forbear, forgive, and love most? and who shall do most to spread the gospel of Christ?

Two simple experiments will convince any true Christian of the practicability of union.

First. A calm, intelligent, and prayerful study of the Bible in reference to it.

Second. The possession and cultivation of the Spirit of Christ.

What Christ would do under the circumstances

of a divided Church may be fully learned from what he taught his disciples by his example and his prayers. Were he now to descend from heaven, and assume the government of his Church, what would he do first? Would he say, "Well done, my Presbyterian brethren; your Westminster Confession of Faith is a decided improvement upon my gospel, as taught in the New Testament: let all the Churches adopt it as the platform of union?" Would not the Church of England and others repudiate him? Were he to go into the First Baptist Church, to teach and celebrate the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and invite all that loved him in the other churches of this city to meet him and participate in the holy service, would not the excellent pastor of that church say, "Yes, my Lord, it shall be as thou hast said?" Or suppose he were to say at the close of his preaching, "It is the custom of this church to invite to the holy supper only 'those who are of the same faith and order:'" would not the pastor of that church *himself* be surprised? Would He not most likely say, "My dear children, all your strifes, envies, divisions, and contentions are wrong and sinful. These little enclosures you have made are too small for me and my family. Let us take down these partition walls, and restore the Church to what it was when I left it?" Would not all our dear brethren who love Jesus Christ in sincerity flow together in *any* church to enjoy his ministry and fellowship? Are we not

under the same obligations to honor and please him as if he were now, in person, in our midst?

Christ will surely be well pleased to see his children make an earnest and prayerful effort to come together. The blessed Comforter, abiding with the Church for ever, would not only be delighted to see such an effort, but would aid in its consummation by the effectual working of his almighty power. The angels of heaven, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, reformers, and all the glorified saints, would, no doubt, rejoice to see such an effort. The only mutterings of disapproval and opposition to it would come from the devil and his emissaries; for this arch deceiver, whose policy has ever been "Divide and conquer," knows full well that such a movement in earnest on the part of the Church would be the signal of his speedy overthrow.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME OF THE STEPS THAT MAY BE TAKEN TO RESTORE THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

FIRST. *Serious, earnest, impartial, prayerful, and scriptural investigation.*

1. *Serious*, because immortal interests are involved in the just and truthful understanding of it. If the present divided state of the Church is unconstitutional and sinful, then she can never fill the great commission, "Preach the gospel to every creature," whilst this sin lies at her door. "If the light which is in her be darkness, how great is that darkness!" How many millions of souls may be at this moment starving for the bread of life, which she has it in her power to send to them! There are, therefore, very deep and solemn interests involved in the true and scriptural understanding of this subject.

2. The investigation should be *earnest*. Any thing that is worth doing at all is worth doing in earnest. "What thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." A listless, superficial investigation of such a subject would be detrimental to the cause, and highly criminal in the sight of God. We can have

no interest in being deceived in regard to it; nor can we have any interest in deceiving others. Let us not go before God with a lie in our mouth. Our blessed Saviour was as much in earnest when he prayed that all that should believe on him, through their word, might be *one*, as he and the Father were *one*, as he was when he prayed and sweat in the garden and bled upon the cross. We can do nothing against the truth, for truth is earnest and invincible. Let us, therefore, come to this investigation in *earnest*.

3. Our investigation must be *impartial*. It will certainly require great effort to free our minds from the trammels of sectarian prejudice, the predilections in favor of that party in the Church with which we have been so long and tenderly associated. Yet, to find the truth, it must be done. Every part and the whole of the word of God must be read, examined, and impartially compared with itself, that we may see the symmetrical beauty and doctrinal harmony of the whole plan of salvation. The wisdom that cometh from above is without partiality.

4. We must come to this investigation with *prayer*; for however *serious*, *earnest*, and *impartial* our effort may be, we must have the blessing of God, that comes in answer to prayer. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. Pray without ceasing, pray without fainting, pray always. If you would find audience with God, if you would have the heart opened to receive the word, and the mind enlightened to understand it; and, above all, if you

would have grace and strength to love and practice its holy doctrines and duties—grace to forgive as you are forgiven, to love as you are loved, to forbear as God has forborne with you, and to have union and peace with your brethren, as you would have the same with God—you must pray in faith.

5. We must come to this investigation *scripturally*; that is, the word of God must be the only rule of faith, and the judge and the end of controversy. The word of God is infallible; it standeth for ever. It needs none of the props of human reason to hold it up, or to make its teachings intelligible. No traditions of the fathers, no theological creeds or confessions of faith can reduce the duties of the Christian life to greater simplicity, or make the way of salvation plainer. Every effort to this end only tends to mystify the truth, and darken counsel by words without knowledge. Let us come then to the pure word of God—the fountain-head of Divine wisdom—and drink of the water of life freely, without the intermixture of human wisdom, which necessarily attaches to the best systems of religious faith devised and adopted by man.

The fact admitted in the mind of the young disciple of Christ, that the word of God is not sufficiently clear and plain as to what he shall believe and do, and that therefore the wisdom of men is necessary to make it such, at once weakens his faith in it, and diminishes his high and sacred veneration for it. If the word of God is of Divine authority, if it is perfect in all that man is to believe

and do for his salvation, then we need nothing else. We may despise and spurn every officious meddler who thrusts himself forward as the expounder of what we are to believe and do, and whose opinion of what the word of God teaches must be set up in the Church as the standard of faith and practice.

The first step, then, toward restoring the Church of Christ to its original unity, purity, and power, is to give the subject *serious, earnest, impartial, prayerful, and scriptural investigation*. This done, as by the help of the word and the Spirit of God we may and ought to do it, we will see the way opening to take another, viz. :

Second. The cultivation of brotherly love toward all Christians. Having given the subject of Christian union, as taught in the Bible, a full and scriptural investigation, we will feel a deeper conviction of the divine obligation to love all who "belong to Christ." This conviction will be an essential help to the performance of the duty. It will not be hard for us to do that which we feel must be done. We will also find a great pleasure in the performance of this duty, and will seek such helps to its performance as are furnished in the word of God. Such as, 1. Often meeting and speaking *together*, as those who feared God did in old times. Nothing can contribute more to soften the asperities of sectarian jealousy, and to the increase of brotherly love, than the free and cordial interchange of Christians on such doctrinal and practical points as they may

recognize as common and harmonious between them. They have *one* Father, *one* Saviour and Elder Brother, and *one* Holy Comforter. The Holy Bible is claimed by each as the only infallible standard of faith and practice. Each claims the *whole of it* as God's perfect law of liberty—not seeking by sectarian learning and criticism to explain away those parts of it which may favor Calvinism or Arminianism—able to make men wise unto salvation. They are *one* in all the sympathies of Christian experience, hatred of sin, and love of holiness—pantings for a higher life of communion with God, and fellowship with all saints—zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of the world. In all the essential elements of Christian character they are *one*, and their often meeting together will afford the best means of recognizing this oneness.

Third. Forbearance, as a Christian duty taught in the Bible, will be an important step toward union. This duty will teach us to receive into the communion and fellowship of the Church all whom Christ receives, even “him that is weak in the faith.” If they show that they love God, that they have the Spirit of Christ, and evince it by showing the fruits of that Spirit in the duties of the Christian life, then we must receive them. Honest differences of opinion as to the modes of worship and Church government, also the modes of explaining and understanding the doctrinal facts of the Bible, must all be held in abeyance to the great doctrinal fact of Christian union. This all must feel to be

fundamental—to be the basis and strength of the Church.

Fourth. Forgiveness, as one of the fruits of love, will also be found a great help towards union. There is as great a difference in the moral temperaments of men as there is in their various systems of religious and moral training. These, together with the different degrees of knowledge and moral development, and the imperfection and vanity of man in his best estate, will suggest the value both of forbearance and forgiveness, in order to maintain unity. We have only to learn how much and how often we need the forgiveness of our Heavenly Father, to learn how much and how often we must forgive our brethren. Thus we are exhorted “to forgive one another, as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven us.” Thus we are taught to pray, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,” and that if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our Heavenly Father forgive us our trespasses. Indeed, we can render no acceptable service to God, while we cherish an unforgiving spirit towards our brother. But if we have taken the scriptural steps to be reconciled to an offended or offending brother, and hold ourselves ready to forgive and be at peace with him, though he may remain incorrigible and unforgiving, we may be assured of forgiveness and acceptance with God, whilst he may be cast out as a heathen. This would not be dividing but purging the Church, and a most valuable means of preserving its unity.

Fifth. Liberty in all things not essential to salvation will be another important step towards restoring the unity of the Church—liberty to exercise the right of private judgment, just as we would have our brethren do towards us. In loving God and keeping his commandments, and in seeking to live charitably and peaceably with all men, we must have unity; but in the minor points of rituals, church music, modes of worship, etc., we must have liberty and charity. The spirit of Christian toleration will work wonders, not only in conciliating our religious sympathies, but also in harmonizing our views of truth and duty; both in major and minor matters. The prayerful and habitual striving to exercise *forbearance*, *forgiveness*, and *liberty*, as these duties are taught in the word of God, will greatly strengthen brotherly love, the bond of union.

Sixth. The claims of Christian union must be affectionately pressed upon the attention of all the Churches of Protestant Christendom. It must be shown what an immense saving of men and money would be made by restoring the unity of the Church. An economical distribution of the men and money now in the service of the Church would give us more than *ten thousand men* who might be sent to supply destitutions in the home and foreign fields of missions, and money amply sufficient to sustain these men in their new fields of labor from year to year. Is it not a most humiliating fact that in almost every village and small town in Protestant Christendom may be found from three to six

small congregations, supplied by as many half-supported ministers, belonging to as many different sects? In many of these cases, the small congregation is heavily taxed to build a large house, and to raise a scanty support for the minister. The minister, half supported, becomes discouraged and inefficient, and in many, *many* instances, turns his attention to some secular pursuit, and gives up the ministry.

Now suppose the brethren of these villages and small towns were "*all of one heart and one soul,*" and, instead of three churches and three ministers, (the former half finished, and the latter half supported,) they have one house, and one minister, "a good man, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," prayed for, loved, and supported: would we not see in all of them a more clear, beautiful, and lovely type of our holy Christianity? Two of the houses might be sold, and the funds appropriated to sustain the two ministers more needed elsewhere. One minister consecrated to the work, visiting, exhorting, and praying from house to house, earnest, plain, and spiritual in his ministry, free from the painful and shameful controversies which were necessary to sustain his party, would do more for the cause of Christ than all three of them had done in their divided, weak, and sickly state. The same economy might be observed in the management of our schools and colleges. Let the facts connected with the sin of division and the blessings of union be disseminated among all classes of our people. Let them be exhorted to come together for prayer and

mutual counsel and advice. Then will the Spirit of God descend upon them "like showers of rain upon the mown grass." "They shall be a willing people in the day of God's power." The whole counsel of God must be declared and spoken out on this subject. The long and sinful silence of the pulpit and the press on this subject must be broken. Alas, that when it is alluded to by either, it is usually coupled with an apology for divisions!

Seventh. Public controversy between brethren, now growing stale, must be discontinued. If brethren have a quarrel against each other, let them settle it in a private way. If they cannot settle it themselves alone, then let them take one or two prudent brethren; and if these shall fail, then let it come before the church, and be settled according to the Scriptures. It is a scandal to religion that two excited, bigoted sectarians should be permitted to fix the time and place for a pitched battle, and thus drag whole communities of brethren into a storm of excitement and bitter opposition to each other. Ah! the Pope of Rome smiles in his sleeve and the devil laughs outright at these disgraceful scenes in our Churches. Was it Rowland Hill who said, at the close of a heated debate, "I felt the devil patting me on the back, saying, Well done, Rowland; give it to them?"

Eighth. Sectarian training must be discontinued. By it our innocent children drink in the evil spirit of blind prejudice, which grows with their growth and strengthens with their strength, until they feel

that it is a part of their religion to hate and shun the ministry and worship of other denominations. The influence of this insidious poison is finding its way into our schools and colleges, engrafting itself into the moral constitution of the youth of our land, as a part of their very life and being. It may well suggest itself to the minds of the skeptical, that these strong barriers to union will be hard to remove. We rejoice, however, that they are not impregnable to truth and love—the power of God. The permeating influence of light and love, though slowly, will surely remove these barriers. The influence of the inquiry which begins in the pulpit, will go into the Church, the Sabbath-school, the family nursery, everywhere eliciting the truth that the Church must be united. Measures and platforms for union will be digested, and submitted to counsels and conventions of ministers and laymen; prayer and effort will increase, as light shines and love burns in the hearts of God's people. It will be a question of paramount importance to young converts, and applicants for membership in the Church, “Do you promise and covenant not only to ‘renounce the works of the devil,’ but also to ‘love the brotherhood’ of all denominations that love Christ, and to hold yourself ready at any time to unite with them in scriptural and prayerful efforts to unite the Church, and to hasten the latter day of glory, when there shall be ‘one fold and one shepherd?’ It will then be a matter of more interest to make them eminent Christians, than to

make them expert in the advocacy of the peculiar doctrines of this or that sect or party.

Ninth. The friends of union and reform must not organize a separate party. An attempt of this kind would not only defeat for the time the objects of the union movement, but it would aggravate and strengthen the great evil they seek to remove. No. In the joy and haste of our flight from Babylon, we must take care that we go not beyond Jerusalem into the wilderness. Extremes beget extremes. Some, with intemperate zeal, have already formed themselves into a Church, renouncing all sects, creeds, and confessions of faith. They have taken a good name, (Christian,) and a good motto, (Union.) They declare for religious liberty and the right of private judgment, yet they exclude from the sacraments and the fellowship of the Church all who will not submit to their faith as to the *mere mode* of baptism. In this one thing they make themselves quite as sectarian as those against whom they inveigh. We must practice what we teach. If we believe that men have the right of private judgment and the freedom of private opinion in religious matters, we must not unchurch them for it. No; these brethren, however good and pure their motives, (and we impugn them not,) might have done more for the cause of union and for the cause of Christ by remaining in the peace and fellowship of the Churches from which they seceded, unless they could have brought about the union of two or more entire sects of Christians. Better for the

friends of union to live in love and peace with their brethren, and diffuse the leaven of Christian charity at home. The act of separating cuts off the opportunity of reforming what is amiss in our own Church.

It would be a grand achievement for the various branches of the Baptist Church, or the Methodist Episcopal, or the branches of the Presbyterian Church, to form a union. When any one of these great unions shall take place, upon true scriptural grounds, and prove that it is of God, and well pleasing to the great Head of the Church—as it will, no doubt, by the increase of love, and zeal, and usefulness—then we may expect to see others, and still others, following in quick succession an example so noble and Christlike. The peace of the world, which prophets saw and poets sung, must begin in the Church of Jesus Christ. The efforts of any peace society to sheathe the sword of war must fail, so long as the Church is divided and warring with herself. The Church is the salt of the earth, the light of the world. The warring states and nations of the world are looking to the Church for an example of unity and peace—they have a right to expect it. Who can doubt that the unhappy divisions in several large denominations in the United States have had an evil influence upon the political parties of the country, and that the danger of a rupture of our glorious union of States is augmented by them? In the two points of integrity and po-

litical economy, this union of States has been a light to the Church—reversing for the time being the order which God has established. Will the Church receive the instructive admonition from the State? Will the Churches which have so recently divided upon questions of mere abstractions and speculations—questions more of a political and local than of a theological character—retrace their steps and heal the breaches in Zion? Have we not gone far enough, ay, too far, in this sinful work of dividing and subdividing the Church of God? Is it not time for a reaction to take place? Let the friends of this great union movement exercise the utmost of their patience, forbearance, and charity. Let them, with true penitence and sorrow of heart, confess the sin of division, before God and their brethren, and pray and labor for the restoration of unity and peace, but let them not adopt the suicidal policy of forming a new union party, by separating from their brethren. Let us come together as *bodies*, and not as *individuals*. We may be denounced, by a few bigoted and narrow-minded sectarians, as latitudinarian, heretical, and disloyal to our Church, but none of these things should move us, except it be to more humility and consecration to the cause of Christ.

Tenth. The mutual exchange of delegates between the higher ecclesiastical bodies of the different denominations, from year to year, with such salutations of love and peace, and with such propositions in behalf of union, as the growing intelligence

and Christian spirit of the Churches may dictate, will be an important step toward union. In this way the subject may be brought fully and fairly before the whole Christian community. The inquiries and discussions in all these religious bodies will elicit a knowledge of what the Bible teaches, and excite a deeper interest on the subject. The subject once before our Churches, and understood by them, and the movement fairly inaugurated by intelligent and prudent men, the grand results will meet the hopes of the most sanguine of its friends.

CHAPTER IX.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

FIRST. We have unmistakable indications that the great question of the present age is the separation of the Church from the State, especially in the vast empire of Great Britain. The forces are gathering and the lines are drawing up for a resolute conflict. The struggle may be protracted and severe, but the issue is in no sense doubtful. A monopoly in religion cannot long exist, where there is free trade and a liberal interchange of commercial, political, and social relations. The golden link which unites the kingdom which *is not* of this world to the kingdom which *is* of this world, will be torn asunder presently. Christianity will be made free, as it makes its subjects free. Conscious of her own intrinsic wisdom, strength, and beauty, by virtue of her union with Christ, she will go forth as a lamp that burneth, bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners.

Presbyterianism has already shaken itself from the trammels of State support and State control.

Scotland has nobly vindicated the sovereignty of Christ and the spirituality of his kingdom. The Scotch Free Church has settled beyond all doubt the power of the *voluntary principle*, and stands forth to-day a most sublime spectacle, little less than a moral miracle. It has settled this principle in the only way by which it could be done—not by elaborate argumentation, but by munificent contributions. Other branches of the Protestant Church are nobly sustained by the same principle. The Church of England will follow next, and the Roman Catholic Church, purged from error, and baptized by *one Spirit* into *one body*, will follow next.

Second. The times on which we have fallen are peculiarly favorable for freedom of thought. Men are less disposed than ever before to submit implicitly to dogmatism. They demand evidence for the support of every proposition made. They question, investigate, and prove all things. Inquiry is their habit, demonstration their object. They are determined not to be imposed upon by proud assumption upon the one hand, nor cunning sophistry upon the other. They cherish the praiseworthy resolve to search out and hold fast whatever is true, and just, and good.

Third. True science no longer scoffs at true religion, and true religion no longer frowns upon true science. Through a most happy conjuncture of events, they have met together and kissed each other. The hour of mockery by the one and of reproach by the other is past. Henceforth, they will

dwell together in unity and good-will. They will each assist the other to illustrate the wisdom, power, and love of God, in the creation, preservation, and redemption of the world. Science will adorn and enrich religion, and religion will ennoble and sanctify science.

Fourth. True Christians everywhere sigh for unity. They lament the prevalence of schism and sectarianism. They yearn to be made really and visibly one fold, having *one* Shepherd. They do not yet see clearly their way to this delightful oneness; but they are feeling after it, if haply they may find it. O that such a baptism of holy light and love may come upon all Christians, as shall make them one in Christ!

Fifth. There is in all nations at this time a growing respect for the rights of the multitude. The millions that toil hard for their bread were once proscribed, and denied the key of knowledge. It is not so now. While their duties are explained, their rights are acknowledged, their opinions are listened to with thoughtful attention, their sympathies are held sacred, and manifold efforts are made to improve their earthly allotment. Much still remains to be done in these respects, which will be accomplished in due time; so that the industrious poor of all nations shall have a goodly heritage.

Sixth. Notwithstanding the scintillations of light and hope springing up in every land to cheer us, there is still an amount of destitution and woe in the earth to make the heart sick. Only think of it:

Eleven hundred millions of immortal beings now live on the earth, three-fourths of whom are without the bread of life! No schools, no Bible, no churches, no Sabbath, no hospitals, no civilization with its bright train of refined and humane institutions! Vast multitudes of them devoid of the arts and sciences, addicted to rapine, murder, and every barbarous atrocity, deluded in their religious notions, ignorant of the true God, their duty and destiny, worshipping senseless idols, and practicing the most revolting rites of self-torture! One half of this number, consisting of mothers, wives, and daughters, have no protection, abandoned to ignorance, slavery, and the grossest immoralities, having no voice in their marriage, wasted in spirit, wearing life away in tears, and in death forced by custom to lie down in sorrow on the funeral pile of deceased husbands, "like Patience on a monument," smiling at grief—all this because the Bible is not there—their altars red with human blood, and groaning under whole hecatombs of sacrificial victims, their divinity an idolatrous polytheism, their source of merit human suffering, their intellect stupidly imbruted, their morals corrupt, and their exit from time a fearful leap in the dark! They crowd all the highways to eternity, hovering in dense clouds over the brink of the great gulf, to be swept off by the dark wings of the angel of death, at the rate of seventy-five thousand per day! All earth's winds and waves have caught the groans and tears of these sighing millions, and rolled them round the world, weaving them into an

anthem of sorrow, whose reverberating thunder rises into the boundless heavens, girdling the everlasting throne of God, and whose echoes may be heard by the Church at the bar of judgment!

One writer represents the Pagan world as sitting at the feet of Christendom, like Lazarus at the rich man's gate, in rags and wounds and penniless, asking for the crumbs that fall from their sumptuous table. They ask for bread which endureth unto everlasting life, the bread which came down from heaven, which if any man eat, he shall never die.

These piteous wailings come louder and still louder, and, like accumulating thunders, they shake earth and heaven. The ocean steamer, the flying steam-horse, and the magnetic telegraph bring these wailings still nearer to us; so that the heart of Christendom is shaken and begins to stir with the throbbings of sympathy—a sympathy that opens the heart, the hand, the purse, and sends a warmer prayer to the throne of God for help. The Spirit of God is outpouring, the Church is praying, the rich are giving, the missionaries are going, the Bible translating, and the doors of the world opening. China and Japan, so long shut in by massy walls, have rolled back their old iron gates upon their rusty hinges, and invited the Christian missionary to enter. The East and West Indies, Mexico, Central and South America, Africa, and all Europe, are panting for the liberty of the sons of God. Well may we exclaim, with adoring wonder, love, and gratitude, “What hath God wrought!”

The Bible is now translated into every important language spoken on earth ; Christian missions are being planted everywhere. O, what may the united Church accomplish in the next ten years ! “ Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength ? I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Who hath heard such a thing ? Who hath seen such things ? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day ? Shall a nation be born at once ? For thus saith the Lord : Behold, I will extend to her peace like a river, the glory of the Gentiles, like a flowing stream.” Who shall limit the Holy One of Israel ? Who shall say unto Jehovah, Why or what doest thou ? Is not the heart of the king in God’s hands ? Can he not turn the hearts of the Emperors of France and Russia, as he is now turning the hearts of the educated and enlightened people of France, Italy, and other Papal countries to seek liberty of conscience to worship God ? The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let the earth rejoice.

Seventh. Not the least hopeful in the signs of the times is the zeal with which lay-members in all the Churches coöperate in union prayer-meetings, with direct reference to the conversion of sinners. These great meetings, conducted chiefly by laymen and young men, have been justly regarded as more unselfish in feeling and more specific in object. The unconverted will have it that the minister’s calling requires that he shall preach and pray “ profession-

ally"—as his calling, or livelihood. It is not so regarded in these meetings of laymen. They therefore address themselves more immediately to the masses, and awaken a deeper and more general interest. These great movements by the laity have had a most happy influence upon the zeal and spirituality of the ministry, both in their preaching and their pastoral visitations. Religion is more practical, the standard of personal piety is higher, and its spirit more catholic. Religious controversy is growing stale, and sectarian bigotry is waning.

Eighth. Lastly, we notice the Young Men's Christian Association as a distinctive feature of the times, and as indicating great good to the Church and the world. "I write unto you, young men," said Paul, "because ye are strong." Is an invading foe to be resisted, and the nation's honor to be maintained? We look to the young men. Is the profession of law or medicine to be filled with honor and ability? We look to the young men. Are our schools and colleges to be filled with competent teachers? We look to the young men. Are the offices of the Federal and State governments to be filled? We look to the young men. Is the gospel of Jesus Christ to be preached to every creature? We look to the young men. They are the hope of the world; upon their shoulders rest the great interests both of Church and State, because they are strong.

In the young men's prayer-meeting, fifteen miles from Belfast, began the great revival of religion which is now renovating Ireland, Scotland, and

England, and shaking all Europe. In the Young Men's Christian Association began the daily union prayer-meetings in the cities of the United States, which have spread a powerful religious awakening all over the land. By their instrumentality, thousands of young men have been "plucked as brands from the fire." By them the Churches are being replenished with a more earnest and spiritual membership, and our pulpits with a more efficient and powerful ministry. By them sectarianism is rebuked and silently overcome, and our Christian Churches gradually drawn more closely together.

In nothing is the special providence of God more manifest than in this organization of young men. The peculiar providence in it is this: that it did not propose at the outstart to labor for the cause of Christian union, but specially for the aid, protection, and salvation of young men. Yet they have contributed greatly to the former, and have not failed in the latter. Seeking a less, they have accomplished a greater good. They have also given much aid and comfort to the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, the American Sunday-school Union, and the cause of missions, both at home and abroad.

Sectarianism, jealous of the growing strength of these catholic institutions, had begun to make insidious encroachments upon them, so that many of their warmest friends began to fear that they might soon be swallowed up by the sectional interests of the divided Churches. But thanks to the good

providence of God for the still, indirect, yet powerful influence of the Young Men's Christian Association in reviving the strength and hopes of these great and glorious unions for the salvation of the world!

Go on, young men, in the ardor of your catholic love and Christian zeal; go on. With ingenuous hearts of good will to all men, with talents and strength consecrated to the glory of God, go on. Your field is the world, mankind your brotherhood. *Go on.* The doors of the world are open before you, and the doors of heaven open to you. *Go on.* In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. In his name and might, *go on.* In the leadership of the Captain of your salvation, *go on.* Scale every mountain, pull down every stronghold, wave the gospel banner high in the front of every battle, shout the song of universal jubilee, till the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

CHAPTER X.

APPEAL TO ALL MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

O MAN of God! "I have set thee a watchman upon the walls of Zion." "Thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me," etc. "Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine; thereby thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." The gospel message delivered by thee must prove "a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death." Well mayest thou cry out under a sense of this fearful responsibility, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Thou standest between the living and the dead, a mouth for God, watching for souls, for which thou shalt account to God. The ground on which thou standest is holy. How awfully solemn the station which thou fillest, God's ambassador to a world of revolting subjects! The terms of peace and reconciliation thou proposest are not thine own, nor canst thou modify or change them. Thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, saith God, and warn them from me. It becomes thee, there-

fore, to study thy credentials well, and stick close to them. Thou art set for the rising and falling of many. Thou art an under-shepherd to feed and lead the flock of Christ—not an hireling that fleeth when the wolf cometh—to go out and in before them, and defend from the assault of every wily foe. Thou shalt mark such as cause division and contentions, and avoid them, for these are contrary to the doctrine of Christ. The trumpet from thy mouth must give no uncertain sound, lest thou scatter and destroy the army of the living God, which thou art appointed to lead on to the conquest of the world. The Church of Christ is compared to a fold or flock of sheep. The figure is both pertinent and beautiful. What so peaceful and social, so averse to separation, as sheep? Wolves and dogs are selfish, and roam alone to seek their prey, to scatter and destroy. But all sheep have the same harmless and peaceable nature. They love society—their *own* society—and are helpless and defenceless when separated from the fold. So is division or separation fatal to the Church of Christ.

O thou man of God, herald of peace, example of the flock of Christ, what art thou doing to bring and hold them together? Dost thou not hear them bleat to come together? Dost thou not see them try to scale the walls and bars that separate them from each other? Wilt thou still bolt the bars and build the walls that keep them asunder? Is it not clear to thy mind that they would come together if the bars and walls were taken away? and that,

therefore, the unfaithful under-shepherds are responsible for these separations in the fold of Christ?

True to the importance of your heavenly calling, you cannot be ignorant nor indifferent to the fact that union is a fundamental principle in the constitution of the Church, and an essential element of its success. That union is strength is as true as that division is weakness, decay, and death; that it is Heaven's appointed instrumentality for the conversion of the world—that by it the world is to *believe*, the world is to know Christ as the Saviour. What, then, is the first great duty of the minister of Christ? Is it not to look into the state of the Church—to see that its piety comes up to the Scripture standard? to “cry aloud, spare not, lift up the voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins?” to say to Zion, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: *all* they gather themselves *together*, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and *flow together*, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea (all nations) shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.” Isa. lx. 1, 3–5. How clearly marked are the steps of the rising glory and greatness of the Church of Christ! First. She lifts up her eyes

round about to see. Second. She *gathers together—flows together*. Third. Her *heart is enlarged*. Fourth. The *abundance of the sea*, the *forces of the Gentiles* shall be “converted unto thee.”

Let every true minister say, “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I *will not rest*, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and *all kings* thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, (my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty,) which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.” Isa. lxii. 1–3.

O brethren! shall it be said of any of us: “His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they *all look to their own way*, every one for his gain, from his quarter.” Isa. lvi. 10, 11. Of such God will say, “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling

of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear." Isa. i. 11-15. "Behold, ye fast (or serve God) for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high." Isa. lviii. 4.

"I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols." Amos v. 21-23.

What an awful calamity it is for a Church to be forsaken of God!—her *richest offerings*, her *many prayers*, even her *loud singing* and the melody of her sweetest instruments, despised as an abomination in his sight!

"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria; (a faction that seceded from the true temple worship at Jerusalem;) they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Therefore, now shall they go captive with the first that go captive. The Lord God hath sworn by himself, saith the Lord the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will

I deliver up the city, with all that is therein." See sixth chapter of Amos.

Such was the curse of God upon the schism and division of the national Church at Mount Gerizim, in Samaria. And shall they "who cause division and contentions" in the Church of Christ hope for less severe judgments than God sent upon the schismatical tribes of Israel? The responsibility of ministers of the gospel as guides of the Church is fully shown in the following scripture:

"My people have been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting-place." Jer. l. 6. The evil did not stop here: verse 7: "All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the Lord."

The same apology for persecuting Protestant Churches is urged by their adversaries—Papists, infidels, and blasphemers. They say of us, we have sinned against the Lord in dividing the Church. They even take this confession from our own lips, for the best men amongst us have the candor to confess the same. In all cases of "division and contention" in the Church, ministers have led the way. If an individual congregation have an intolerant and bitter spirit toward others, they caught it from their pastor. He is their oracle, their guide, and is, therefore, responsible for them in a sense truly solemn and fearful. Is God displeased, his

cause dishonored, the Church weak and sickly, and reproached by adversaries? He is responsible. In no way can the ministers of the gospel "bring forth fruits meet for repentance" for this wrong, except by bringing back the scattered, straying, divided sheep to their "resting-place," unity, peace, and love.

O, let us lift up our eyes and see if God may not be at this time withholding his blessing from the Church on account of her divisions and contentions. For more than two hundred years the primitive Church had great unity and peace in doctrine and fellowship; consequently, she had great success and prosperity. When divisions and contentions came, then came Antichrist and every evil work, which continued the reign of terror and darkness until the reformation by Martin Luther. For about one hundred years from the beginning of the Reformation, the Church knew no division into sects and denominations. During this short period, the Church had power to resist every foe, and made astonishing progress toward bringing both the Papal and Pagan world to the faith and obedience of Christ.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a short truce in the war of Christian sects in the United States, and many Churches in the South and West came together for prayer and united coöperation for the spread of the gospel. The results were glorious, and are still operating for good, both in this country and in Europe. It was in this

blessed work the spirit of union in missions obtained new life and power. Unions sprang up in every part of Protestant Christendom to send the Bible, without note or comment, to the whole world. The American Sunday-school Union, the tract cause, the temperance cause, and others, all found their origin and success in union. The great revival of 1857 and 1858 found its power in union. The great work now prevailing in the North of Ireland, bringing heretics, skeptics, formalists, and even Roman Catholics under the power of spiritual religion, is the work of union.

Brethren in the ministry must not fail to present constantly and affectionately before their Churches the facts of history and the Divine authorities of the Holy Bible on the subject of union. Your Churches will follow you as you follow Christ. Let the precept and example of union come from the ministers of Christ, and the Churches will follow.

Union is far more easy and practicable with the laity than the clergy. The laity hesitate to propose it, in many instances, lest they might give offence to the clergy, and the clergy are afraid of giving offence to the laity. Thus each of them is tempted to offend God and please the devil by a false delicacy and a sinful silence on the subject.

The more popular and talented ministers are afraid to speak out on the subject, lest they may be regarded as disloyal to their own party, or wanting in orthodox soundness in the faith. Others, less prominent in the Church, hesitate to speak and act

on the subject because those brethren filling more important places in the Church are silent. And thus the devil and sin and self all join in the temptation, "Better let things stay where they are, lest they become worse." This great age of progress opens the way for improvement and reformation in every thing except religion. But, brethren, ours is a peculiar reformation. It advances by going backward, it rises by descending, (humility,) it becomes mighty by weakness, (in itself,) wise by becoming foolish, rich by becoming poor, and the more grand and attractive as it becomes the more simple and primitive.

The following extract from Rev. Dr. Baron Stow's "Christian Brotherhood" is here given, by his kind permission, to advance the cause of Christian union. Dr. Stow, of the city of Boston, is well known in this country and Europe as one of the ablest ministers in the Baptist Church. His varied learning, his deep and ardent piety, his eminent abilities as a preacher and pastor, and his truly catholic spirit, have contributed to draw around him many admirers and warm friends of all the leading Christian denominations, both in Europe and America. No doubt, his travels in Europe, and his free and cordial interchange with eminent brethren of all the Churches, have contributed much to free him from the trammels of party spirit.

The contents of his "Christian Brotherhood," published in 1859 by Gould & Lincoln, Boston, may indicate how fully the Doctor enters into the spirit

of the great religious movement which is now bringing the Christian Churches so much closer together:

Chapter I. The union that is desirable.

Chapter II. Considerations that render Christian union desirable.

First. The injurious effect of division upon the piety of the Church.

Second. The injurious effect of division in perverting and wasting the resources of the Church.

Third. The injurious effect of division in weakening the demonstration in favor of our religion.

Chapter III. Some methods by which our own denomination (the Baptist) may probably contribute to the promotion of Christian brotherhood.

First. We may endeavor carefully to dispossess ourselves of the spirit of sect.

Second. We may cultivate a higher degree of personal holiness.

Third. We may illustrate by our own practice the great principle that the word of God is the sole authorized standard in all matters of religion.

Fourth. We may cheerfully surrender every thing adverse to union which we are not bound by our allegiance to Christ to retain.

Fifth. We may carefully refrain from every thing that may unnecessarily tend to widen the breach among Christians, or tend to perpetuate its continuance.

Sixth. We may coöperate with all Christians in every thing not interdicted by the laws of Christ.

Seventh. We may encourage a pacific ministry.

Eighth. We may patronize a peace-making press.

Ninth. We may implore a larger effusion of the Holy Spirit.

The "Christian Brotherhood" is not for Baptists alone, but should be read by all Christians. None but sectarian bigots could object to it. We quote a few thoughts on the Pacific Ministry, designed to show that the ministers of the gospel must lead the way in the great work of union and reform :

"The Church has largely experienced both good and ill from the men whom she has received as her spiritual advisers and guides. The confidence reposed in them as the accredited representatives of Christ, the sacredness of their office, the knowledge of Divine things which they are supposed to possess, and the freedom of intercourse with the people to which they are generally welcomed, all contribute to their influence in determining the principles, and moulding the characters, and tempering the spirit, and directing the conduct, of the great mass of professed disciples. It will not be denied that they have often employed this influence in fomenting "discord among brethren," in aggravating the ferocity of party spirit, in rearing higher and stronger the separating barriers, in rendering the separated more belligerent and more implacable. With them commenced the first schisms that disfigured and crippled the Church. By them mainly have schisms been multiplied, and widened, and deepened, and perpetuated. They have been the

guardian sentinels, posted along the lines of party entrenchments, to superintend their integrity, and, whenever invasion is threatened, to give the trumpet a *certain* sound. Jerome, one of the Christian fathers, has these words: 'Searching the ancient histories, I can find none who have more rent the Church of God than those who sustained the office of ministers.' Martin Luther is said often to have prayed: 'From vain-glorious doctors, contentious pastors, and unprofitable questions, good Lord, deliver us.'

"The religious controversies which have inflicted so many wounds upon Christianity and upon Christian consciences, have generally been commenced and continued by factious ministers. No others could or would have originated or maintained them. Common Christians had no interest in them, and felt a repugnance to them, except so far as they became partisans, and sympathized with their guides. Let the people of the United States interpret for themselves our Constitution, one of the plainest documents in the English language, and they would understand it alike. Their leaders misdirect them, and draw them off into parties rallied around some unintelligible, abstract construction, and teach them to regard one another as the enemies of their country and the generators of all political mischief. So, if the Bible, no part of which is 'of any private interpretation,' had been put into the hands of all Christians, and kept there, and they had been properly instructed to read and in-

interpret it for themselves, the Church, we may believe, would never have been disturbed and harassed with those subtle distinctions and endless logomachies which have so grievously torn her own vitals, and often made her despicable in the eyes of unbelievers. Ecclesiastical history tells a most humiliating tale of centuries, with respect to the spirit and behavior of a large portion of the Christian priesthood, their ambition, their contentiousness, their acrimony of spirit, their disregard of all courtesy, their inflammability of temper, their violence of denunciation, their bitterness of invective, their ingenuity in belligerent tactics, their rage for party victory; and to such men—demons they would in any other relation be called—may chiefly be traced the divisions and hostile feelings and attitudes of the various sects which have successively appeared, and, like the renowned controvertists of Kilkenny, disappeared.

The minister of the gospel, especially the pastor of a church, occupies a post of influence, and it is in his power to do much either for peace or for war, according to the end which he proposes to accomplish, the means he employs, and the spirit by which he is moved. He can promote good will and harmony, or he can excite disaffection, and drive the divided farther asunder. He can be a fountain of bland influences that shall soothe and heal, or he can be a volcano pouring forth sulphureous elements that scorch and blacken and devastate.

Can we for a moment hesitate respecting the

character and the spirit which we ought to encourage in the ministry of the Church? Have we any pleasure in the labors of a man who makes the pulpit the vehicle of inflammatory appeals, and who never seems to be better pleased than when he sees that he has propagated his own spirit, and kindled in other bosoms the flame that has charred his own? Is he the pastor for us, who is fond of irritating other denominations by pungent witticisms and sarcastic ridicule, and then applying the fiery caustic to the excoriated surface to see how the victims will writhe and scowl? Is he our preferred spiritual guide who, instead of leading us into green pastures and beside the still waters, conducts us into the sectarian battlefield where hearts bleed and love weeps?

If there be a spot on earth where the spirit of peace and love should have its cherished home, it is the pulpit. If there be a man on earth who ought to be baptized in that spirit, it is the minister of Jesus. It is good to come near to such a pulpit, sacred to love, and to find it occupied by such a minister, "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." It is good to pass our Sabbath hours in a sanctuary where there is a Calvary, and on that Calvary a cross around which we may gather in humility, repentance, confession, faith and hope, and by the power of which we may feel ourselves drawn together somewhat in likeness of heavenly companionship. And it is good to be led to that cross by a pastor who dwells near it himself, and breathes the

atmosphere that surrounds it, and walks in the light that it pours upon the humble, and speaks the sentiments that it inspires, and prays like Him who bled upon it and gave it all its glory. He preaches the truth as he derives it for himself directly from the word of God; but he does it without bigotry or dogmatism. "Set for the defence of the gospel," he "contends earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;" but he does it not factiously or provokingly. He warns all wrong-doers of "the wrath to come;" but he mingles with the holy wrath of God no wrath of his own. If he uses hard arguments, his words are soft. He is "patient towards all men," "gentle unto all men," "in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." As "the servant of God," he does not "strive," and he stirs no strife among others. He is never satirical, except against immorality. Against persons he utters no reproachful epithets. He inflicts no unnecessary wounds. For the sake of peace, he yields every thing except truth and conscience. He is more concerned for the progress of the general cause than for sectarian victory; for the salvation of souls than for the increase of his denomination. He dwells more upon the spiritual than the ritual of religion; more upon the fundamental than the circumstantial. He puts truths and duties in apostolic order and apostolic proportion, and insists upon each, in the apostolic spirit, according to its relative importance. He diffuses everywhere, and by every appropriate means, the genial and sunny influences of that

heaven-born Charity which "suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, beaveth not unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and "never faileth." He possesses and exhibits, in large measure, the wisdom that is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." In him are blended two characteristics: he is wise as a serpent, harmless as a dove. He studies to promote brotherly love, regarding it as a proof of discipleship, and as adapted to convince unbelievers of the excellence of the gospel. Hence he exhorts all to be "kindly affectioned one to another," "forbearing one another in love." He finds the Church "wounded and half dead," and he pours in oil and wine, and endeavors to sooth her feverish throbings with the healing hand of kindness. He labors to draw off the minds of the people from undue attention to inferior matters by presenting great truths for their contemplation, great commands for their obedience; and thus, like a wise physician, he skilfully administers the proper moral alteratives. In private prayer he wrestles with God for the peace and unity of the Church; in public devotion he pleads for the removal of the barriers that obstruct the free and holy fellowship of all believers. Like the high-priest of Israel, he never

enters the holy place for the purpose of intercession, without the names of all the tribes upon his breast-plate. As the tabernacle was the rallying-point of the host in its marches to Canaan, and the central bond of union around which was every nightly encampment, so this leader of a Christian flock plants the cross in the centre, and invites all to encircle it in close combination, knowing for a certainty that there the spirit of discord cannot develop itself—there every schismatical feeling must wither and die. He dwells much upon the oneness of God's people, having one Father, one Saviour, one hope, one inheritance. He is "a lover of good men," a lover of all goodness. For controversy he has no taste. As instinctively as the dove-like Spirit, he

"Flies from the realms of noise and strife."

He delights to work upon that part of the spiritual temple where the sound of axe and hammer is not heard. His great object is the conversion of sinners and their culture in holiness, and in all he has supreme reference to the glory of Christ, preferring rather to jewel the Redeemer's crown than his own. He anticipates with strong rapture the period when the whole Body of Christ shall be "compacted together in love," and "come into the unity of the faith;" the halcyon days of prophecy, when the godly seed shall rise above the partition walls by which they are divided, and flow together to certify, in the embrace of Christian fellowship, before the

face of the world, the ancient power of godliness. He longs for the key-note to be struck, to which ten thousand times ten thousand voices shall respond in sweetest harmony, and to which angels themselves shall lend a delighted ear, finding in it the echo of their own on that day when they sang at the advent of the Redeemer. He is not widely known to the world; he aspires not to the distinctions that men confer. His immediate influence is not far-reaching, but it is all healthful, and will go on through numerous channels, diffusing the beauty of holiness, long after he shall have gone to his rest and his reward.

How benign is the influence of such a pastor! How green is the spot which he cultivates! How refreshing to place one's moral nature under such influences! How profitable to be trained by such a teacher for usefulness and heaven, himself leading the way! How great the pleasure of contributing to the support of such a minister, knowing that we are sustaining an agent of good, and good of the highest order! His less tolerant brethren may suspect him of favoring some heresy, or of abating his zeal for the truth; but none of these things move him. He believes that holiness and peace are inseparable concomitants, and that by promoting either he facilitates the advancement of the other. Like Chillingworth, he says, "If the ruptures of the Church might be composed, I do heartily wish that the cement might be made of my heart's blood;" or, like Baxter: "I can as willingly

be a martyr for Love as for any article of my creed."

Were all the ministers even of one denomination thus to feel and act, would the cause of truth suffer in their hands? Would their Master rebuke, or commend them? How long would it be before the prejudices of others would melt away like snow in a summer atmosphere, and the thousands of divided Israel reunite under the peaceful standard of the Son of David? Prophecy has sketched the picture, "a thing of beauty," on the future, and blessed are they to whom it shall be "a joy for ever." "The watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice TOGETHER shall they sing; for they shall SEE EYE TO EYE, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

"Were love, in these the world's last dotting years,
As frequent as the want of it appears,
The churches warmed, they would no longer hold
Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold;
Relenting forms would lose their power, or cease,
And e'en the dipped and sprinkled live in peace;
Each heart would quit its prison in the breast,
And flow in free communion with the rest."*

* William Cowper.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CONDITIONS OF CHRISTIAN UNION.

THE REV. THOMAS O. SUMMERS, D. D., Book Editor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, at Nashville, has kindly contributed an essay for this work, on "*The Conditions of Christian Union.*"

Dr. Summers wields the pen of a ready writer. His biblical lore, his ripe scholarship, his poetic genius, his peculiar and impressive style as a pulpit orator, sanctified by a divine charity, which embraces in its broad range the whole brotherhood of believers in Christ, have designated him for the responsible office he fills, and fit him eminently to be a minister of union and peace.

His essay will be read and appreciated by all, as a happy conception, and admirably adapted to our subject and our times. It is as follows :

THE CONDITIONS OF CHRISTIAN UNION.

THE restoration of Christendom to catholic unity is the great problem of the age : all classes of Christians are attempting to solve it. To superinduce the desired unity, controversies are waged, compromises

proposed, alliances formed, volumes published, and prayers offered. All these we accept as favorable symptoms of the times. We dare not look on with a cold indifference, as if we had no interest in the result. We have an interest in it, and are alive to it. We cannot better define our position in regard to this great question, than by laying down what we conceive to be the Conditions of Christian Union.

That which underlies the whole, in our judgment, is a recognition of the evils of disunion. These, indeed, are so obvious, and have been so often urged by both the friends and foes of Christianity; that it is sufficient in this place merely to allude to them. Some, indeed, seem to think that the advantages growing out of the divisions of the Church more than countervail the evils in question. But this is more than doubted. The multiplication of sects may accommodate all the dogmatical preferences and spiritual idiocrasies which obtain in any community; it may prove a spur to activity and effort; it may guard the citadel of Christian faith, and, to some extent, preclude ecclesiastical tyranny, formality, dangerous heresy, and the like; but there is a more excellent way of securing these benefits and preventing those evils. That involves too fearful a sacrifice of prestige, and temper, and time, and labor, and money; for ecclesiastical polemics, (which seem to result inevitably from the sectarianism of the Church,) like all other wars, are somewhat costly undertakings.

As a matter of course, the possibility of union must be recognized as a foregone condition—as that which is absolutely necessary to justify any attempt to promote this great interest.

It will not be denied that there was a time—a brief period, we admit—when all the disciples of Christ were of one heart and of one mind. Thus it is said of the three thousand Pentecostal converts, “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” And when the number was increased to five thousand, (or, as some think, to eight thousand,) it is said that “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.” And whatever bickerings may have subsequently obtained among them, there does not appear to have been any schism in the Church for a considerable time. And we presume that that which lent so great a charm to the Church in the first age will not be wanting to it in its latter-day glory.

It is true that even in the apostolic churches, in process of time there arose heretical divisions and sectarian animosities; but they were never dealt with as unavoidable, necessary evils, much less as, on the whole, desirable. No one would gather this from the language of Paul to the Corinthians: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there may be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” He reproves them

for the contentions which grew out of their schisms—their Paulian, Apollonian, and other factions—and traces them all to a “carnal” source. By the beautiful metaphor of the body and its members, he illustrates the necessity of union—“that there should be no schism in the body.” He employs the same image, with the same intent, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he inculcates “the unity of the faith,” in which they were to “grow up in all things into Christ the Head, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” He exhorts the Philippians to “be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” But his Epistles generally, and those of his fellow-apostles, abound with exhortations of this character, all postulating the possibility of a harmony in their confession of the faith once delivered unto the saints, and a perfect union in “the love of the Spirit.” And no marvel. Their language on this subject is but the echo of their Master’s great sacerdotal prayer, offered not alone for his apostles, but also for those who should become believers through their agency: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” Surely, if Paul with his enthusiasm could make Quixotic exhortations, our blessed Lord could offer no Utopian

prayers. He prayed for nothing in itself impossible.

Nor can it be said that nothing more was intended than a union of affection. The apostle wished all his brethren to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." And why not? Is error, the most infinitesimal modicum of error, desirable? Is truth tolerant of error? Is it not eternally exclusive of error in all its forms? Error has no friendly correspondence with love: truth and love are blended together by the apostle. Error cannot promote holiness: we are enlightened by the truth, begotten by the truth, purified by obeying the truth. Howsoever, to our purblind vision, certain forms of error may seem to favor the development of some virtuous and holy principles, we may rest assured there is no true relationship between them; "for what fellowship hath light with darkness?" There is a necessary unity in truth—a beautiful harmony in all its parts; and herein lies its power. Its agency for good is weakened, exactly in proportion as it is impinged upon by error in any of its forms. Truth is sacred, and should be held inviolate at any hazard, at any cost. The question is not whether the principle involved be trivial or grave, whether it take rank with what are called fundamental or with non-fundamental points: as truth, it makes no compromise with error, and it must be maintained, though life be sacrificed in maintaining it. This is the inexorable law of our nature; it verifies itself in our moral

consciousness, and asks no other testimony. While in the present imperfect state, we may not, indeed, expect to be free from error of every sort, and of course we shall not be held responsible for any error which results from invincible causes; but can any man believe that the grave doctrinal differences which divide Christendom are all inevitable? We venture the assertion, that were the pride, and prejudice, and obstinacy, and indolence, and worldliness, which infest the multiform Church of the present age, exchanged for humility, and charity, and docility, and effort, and spirituality, nine-tenths of the errors which curse Christendom would cease to challenge any further notice than to be labelled as curious fossils in our ecclesiastical museums—curious, but ugly, as the ichthyosaurs of a geological cabinet.

A desire for catholic union would seem to be an indispensable condition of its realization. If we do not conceive it to be desirable—if we do not earnestly desire it—we shall not put forth any efforts or make any sacrifices to secure it. We fear that there are not a few, who profess and call themselves Christians, who are not much concerned about the matter. They are perhaps of a phlegmatical temperament, possessed of a considerable amount of a certain kind of philosophy, which makes them unconcerned about the opinions and practices of others: if they agree with them, very well, it is their good fortune that they do; but if they do not, it is their own business, and they themselves must see

to it. A man of this class is not going to put himself to the trouble to set people right on religious subjects: he thinks for himself, and asks no foreign aid—considers it an offensive pragmatism; and, with his understanding of the golden rule, he does to others as he would they should do unto him—he lets them alone in their errors. If such a spirit of isolation and selfishness prevail in the Church, there can be no union, as there will be no desire for any. It is hard to say which is the greater evil, an apathy of this sort, or a relish for that ecclesiastical pugilism which has so long been a reproach to Christianity. Those whose voice is still for war—who take as much interest in Church battles as some who call themselves good citizens take in brutal prize-fights—*ipso facto* cannot desire union. Their interest in Christianity is kept alive by exciting controversy: deprive them of this, and they seek their necessary stimulus in some other department of life. They will subscribe liberally to defray the expenses of some pitched battle between two doughty champions, red-hot thunderbolts of theological war, or for the publication and diffusion of fierce polemical literature; when they will draw their purse-strings, in the most approved style of prudent parsimony, at the bare mention of any enterprise of a pacific and catholic complexion. Such men do not desire unity—they cannot comprehend it—they cannot promote it. They can “keep” any thing better than “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace:” this, as the apostle in-

timates, cannot be kept without such "endeavoring" as implies an earnest desire to realize it.* How strange it is that they have not discovered that in the majority of those fierce controversies the interests of neither party are materially affected—that error is as likely to be promoted as truth, as the popular vote is controlled more by controversial expertness than the force of argument—and that when the truth chances to gain the victory, it is generally at such an expense of charity as makes one feel that the repetition of such victories would ruin the cause which they are designed to subserve. Men must be brought to see and feel and acknowledge the evils of bigotry, whether of the cold and philosophic, or the hot and crusading type, before they will heartily desire to see all Christians of one heart and of one mind.

A willingness to surrender prejudices for the promotion of union is another condition of its realization. Few men, indeed, will acknowledge that they have any prejudices. In their own estimation, nearly all men are philosophers. They can give a

* The word *σπουδαζοντες*, and its cognates, are elsewhere rendered by "study," "do diligence," "labor," "be diligent," 2 Tim. ii. 15; iv. 9, 21; Heb. iv. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 14; "diligent," "forward," 2 Cor. viii. 17, 22; "diligently," "carefully," "instantly," Luke vii. 4; Phil. ii. 28; 2 Tim. i. 17; Tit. iii. 13; "haste," "diligence," "carefulness," Mark vi. 25; Luke i. 39; Rom. xii. 8, 11; Heb. vi. 11. The use of this expressive term suggests that the object is attainable, vastly desirable, but not to be realized without earnest effort. Our word "endeavor" originally had this meaning. See Richardson's Dictionary.

reason for their opinions and practices. They are Papists or Protestants, Calvinists or Arminians, Prelatists or Presbyterians, on principle. Whoever else may be, they are not their "birth's blind bigots, fired with local zeal." Whatever may have been their early creed, "reason rebaptized them when adult." They are what they are on conviction. Very good. That is as it should be; and yet we have a shrewd suspicion that it is not thus in an overwhelming majority of cases. The *fides carbonarii* is the faith of many who make a higher boast: "I believe what the Church believes; the Church believes what I believe; and we both believe the same." As a Romanist, this is consistent enough, as the right of private judgment is denied in the Romish communion, as witness the Creed of Pius IV., and the Canons of the Council of Trent; but such a principle as this makes a sorry figure alongside the Magna Charta of Protestant freedom. Protestantism, indeed, not only recognizes the right of private judgment, but enforces it as a duty. The Bible, interpreted by reason, aided in its exercise by prayer and purity of motive, is the sole judge of controversies. The writings of Fathers, the canons of Councils, Confessions, and Commentaries, are not to be despised—they are, indeed, to be pressed into service in an attempt to interpret the word of truth; but after all, this itself, the Bible alone, as understood by our own unbiased reason, is "the judge which ends the strife." Prejudices of birth, education, local position, social connections, and the like,

must not be allowed to enter as disturbing elements when we are trying to settle down on the firm basis of truth. We should study with candor the theories and defences of so-called heretics and schismatics; and not, on account of the odium which has been cast on the name of Arius, or Pelagius, or Augustin, or Luther, or Calvin, or Arminius, or Socinus, or Swedenborg, or Wesley, or any other leader among the sects of divided Christendom, treat their various systems with indiscriminate contempt, much less prejudge their claims to an interest in the common salvation. It may be admitted that a very brief examination of some of the theories of religion which have been set afloat in the world will be enough to satisfy us that they are not the faith of God's elect. But even in those cases a candid examination of them will enable us to repudiate them with greater firmness, and to oppose them with more reason, than if we had never examined them: it may serve too to illustrate more fully the truth and importance of what we may consider a more scriptural system; and it will almost invariably make us more charitable toward the abettors of those theories, and more discriminating in denouncing their errors.

The cultivation of a charitable spirit is an indispensable condition of Christian union. This spirit will prepare us to recognize a vital and an essential religious character under very great disguises of what we may consider heterodox opinion and irregular practice. It is a good rule to judge our-

selves with rigor, and others with lenity. We may readily enough determine that we could not be Christians and adhere to such and such a creed, or to grant ourselves such and such indulgences; but we cannot read the hearts of others; indeed, we find it no easy task to read our own. This of itself should induce us to pass a candid judgment on our neighbor. He himself may, indeed, settle the question by an unambiguous disregard of scriptural requirements with reference to faith and practice; in that case, there is no room for a favorable judgment. But where there is room for any doubt, we must let him have the benefit of it. If he professes to be a disciple of Christ, and his life does not clearly antagonize his profession, let us beware how we deliver him to Satan. If he gives reasonable evidence that he loves our Lord Jesus Christ, notwithstanding, according to our standard, he may not be altogether orthodox in his creed, we are not at liberty to repudiate his claim. If he is received by Christ, we reject him at our peril. This is the rule by which we must be governed. "Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God the Father." "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make him stand." When we "receive" one who is "weak in the faith," it must not be "to doubtful disputations," or we may cause him to stumble, and be the means of his ruin. Instead of uniting a distracted Church,

this spirit of censoriousness, as opposed to charity, would divide the most compact society ever formed since the day of Pentecost. Charity alone is the bond of perfectness, as it cheerfully and encouragingly recognizes all the good that is in our brother, overlooks many of his imperfections, and cautiously and tenderly seeks to remedy those which may not be ignored.

A careful exclusion of all asperity in controversy is an important condition of union. We do not say the exclusion of all controversy. To controvert our neighbor's opinions, when we believe them to be erroneous and injurious, is not only consistent with the law of love, but demanded by it. Error is not good for the soul: it is not a wholesome *pabulum mentis*; not only is there no nutriment in it, but it is poisonous in its very nature. The mind, indeed, may survive its pernicious influence, and so may the body survive the injury resulting from the use of alcohol, opium, tobacco, and other deadly poisons; but it does not follow that it is not injured thereby. In one particular the parallel fails: the drugs in question, like many other poisons, may be used with medicinal effect, and, in a diseased state of the body, may be exhibited with favorable results; but mental poisons can never be so employed. As well think of using sin to restore the sinner to righteousness, as using error for the advancement of truth, or preparing the mind for its clear apprehension. If he is my friend who warns me of the poisonous nature of certain articles which I am in

danger of using for purposes of bodily nutrition, much more is he my friend who points out to me any deleterious ingredient in the dogmas to which I am resorting, or am in danger of resorting, to supply the cravings of my intellectual and moral nature for knowledge and truth, the only food on which it may feed and grow. If I ask for bread, it is no charity to suffer me to grasp at a stone; if I want a fish, let me not be allowed to lay hold on a serpent; if I am in quest of an egg, can you, as my friend, see me take up a scorpion to bite me? But suppose I am determined to swallow the poison, what then? You must, of course, let me suffer the consequences of my rashness and folly. You may pity my obstinacy and delusion, but you have no right to punish me for it, to hate me, to persecute me: it is questionable whether you do well to reproach me; you certainly do not if you reproach me with bitterness and pursue me with vindictive zeal. I may injure myself, less or more, by my erroneous opinions; but that is no reason that you should put me on the rack, confine me in prison, burn me at the stake, or, according to modern usage, sentence me to a newspaper pillory and a social ostracism. The *odium theologicum*, though it is not so fierce and foul as in the days of Eck and Luther, Calvin and Servetus, Gomarus and Arminius, Toplady and Wesley, is still the reproach of the Church. The professed followers of Him who did not strive nor cry, neither did any man hear his voice in the streets—of Him who was meek and lowly in heart—

make a sorry demonstration of their discipleship when they denounce one another with anger and wrath, bitterness and malignity, simply because they differ on what they consider the true principles of that religion whose grand characteristic is love. If there must be controversy, let it be conducted in the spirit recommended by the gentle Herbert:

“Be calm in arguing; for fierceness makes
Error a fault and truth discourtesy.
Why should I feel another man’s mistakes
More than his sickness or his poverty?
In love I should; but anger is not love,
Nor wisdom neither; therefore, gently move.”

“Where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” To call a man a liar, a knave, a fool, a schismatic, a heretic, or to award him any other of the elegant and classical compellations which have so largely obtained in ecclesiastical controversy, is not, perhaps, the most ready way of bringing him over to my opinion; it certainly is not the most promising expedient for restoring unity to a distracted Church. If Moses had followed the counsel of Joshua when he wished him to forbid Eldad and Medad to prophesy in the camp, he might have excited a sedition in the congregation, but the movement would not have been very likely to prove conservative of his rightful authority—not a thousandth part as much so as his mild and wise rebuke of the officious and bigoted zeal of Joshua: “Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets!” If

Jesus had sanctioned the bigotry of John, who, when he saw one casting out devils in the name of Christ, forbade him, because he did not consort with them, not only would a zealous witness for Christ have been muzzled, but, in all likelihood, he who was for him would have been turned against him. So, if the Boanerges had been allowed to bring fire down from heaven on the Samaritans, instead of having a tendency to conciliate that schismatical people, as the courteous bearing of Jesus toward them on another occasion evidently had, it would have intensified their hatred to all who bore the Jewish name, and would have blocked their way to the reception of that salvation which is of the Jews. Besides, while the use of harsh, dictatorial, and contemptuous language is ill-adapted to convert those whose opinions we oppose, it fosters and strengthens a disposition of the mind antagonistic to the discovery and embrace of the truth, which ought to be the object of all controversy. Church history tells us of councils and synods in which the dominant parties had every thing their own way; their opponents were denounced as damnable heretics, not being allowed to meet their haughty judges on equal ground in a free discussion: the result could be predicted without the gift of inspiration: the *soi-disant* catholic or orthodox party failed to convince the so-called heretics of their error, and the latter, in many instances the more scriptural and rational in their creed, had no chance to modify the views of the former. Thus truth and charity

were both outraged, and the rent in the body of Christ was made worse. We are well assured that one of the great obstacles to Christian union at the present day is the remembrance of the proud, rancorous, persecuting spirit manifested by the ancestors of one ecclesiastical body toward those of another. When we see outcroppings of the same spirit, though restrained by legal and social influences, in the present age, there is a temptation suggested to resent it in the exercise of that freedom of which in this age and clime one cannot be deprived by any politico-ecclesiastical bigotry and oppression. But it may be well to inquire if that feeling is not produced by the working of the old leaven within us. Is it not better to forget the disgraceful past? or, at least, not to hold any of the present age responsible for the obliquities of former times? to make a very liberal allowance for the prejudices of education, and to let the greater charity of our temper illustrate the greater orthodoxy of our creed? It seems certain to us that in default of this spirit a catholic union is out of the question.

We will notice what we conceive to be another condition of union, viz.: An abstinence from all pragmatical attempts to enforce and precipitate it.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, in this country at least, it is needless to speak of secular coercion. We could not secure it if we would; and may we not add, few American Christians would resort to it if they could? We certainly should

consider it a calamity a thousand-fold more to be deprecated than the fiercest persecution, to have the principles of our particular communion enforced by the secular arm. We have seen the lamentable effects of enforced conformity when, at various intervals and in various countries, Arianism, and Athanasianism, and Romanism, and Anglicanism, and Lutheranism, and Calvinism, and Puritanism, and Presbyterianism, and Anabaptism, etc., were in the political ascendant. We have had enough of imperial edicts, royal decrees, papal bulls, conciliar canons, and popular frenzies—inquisitorial cells, star-chambers, and synodal tribunals—excommunications, ejections, fines, imprisonments, tortures, the halter, axe, and stake—rare instruments and agencies for the promotion of union! Surely they will keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace! Let us rejoice that such insane and diabolical expedients for the promotion of catholic unity, so far as we are concerned, as we may fondly hope, are abandoned for ever. Let us rejoice, too, that in other parts of Protestant Christendom the spirit of freedom is year by year extending its area, and that even in Roman Catholic countries the rights of conscience are more and more recognized, giving the promise that religious liberty will soon be the heritage of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

It is also needless to say much about ecclesiastical coercion. That was never very formidable, except when backed by the state. Even in the

darkest days of Popery, after the inquisitor had done his worst on the heretic, he did not take him to the stake and burn him himself: he merely handed the incorrigible wretch over to the secular arm, "beseeching it to treat him with clemency." We are not sure, however, that, even in this country, there is not sometimes resort to a species of ecclesiastical coercion to secure the unity of the faith. Any attempt to keep a man from leaving the communion in which he has been educated, or to which he has belonged, after he has seen cause to change his belief, takes rank with the ecclesiastical tyranny in question. Any gratuitous impeachment of a man's motives in so doing—questioning his sincerity—attacking his reputation—shunning his society—crippling his influence—injuring his business—and the like—all of which may be done by a religious society, especially by a powerful Church—must be ranked with the racks and cells of inquisitorial torture. There may be thousands of persons nominally connected with certain communions whose principles they do not believe, who are kept within their pales by an ecclesiastical rod of this sort, which is held *in terrorem* over their heads. It may be said that such faint-hearted persons are not worth retaining. Granted: then let them go. Smooth their passage. A bad Protestant—a Puseyite, for example—may make a passable Papist. Catholic union is better promoted by the fullest development of men's real opinions than by their coerced suppression. The rights of conscience must be

conceded—the freest possible utterance of every man's opinions must be encouraged—or the union desired can never be realized. Many an errorist will lay himself open to conviction of the truth by pursuing this liberal course toward him: many an heretical sect has been strengthened by the indirect persecutions to which it has been subjected. Truth needs no such patronage as invokes any coercion of those who are in error.

Catholic union cannot be promoted by sinister proselytism. By the guerilla warfare which has been so long carried on between rival Christian sects, Ephraim may nourish his envy of Judah, and Judah may continue to vex Ephraim; but by this process the two sticks will never become one in the hand of Jehovah. Ezek. xxxvii. 19. Proselytism is the bane of Christendom—it is the essence of schism—the direct antagonist of catholicity. The proselyter magnifies the errors of other sects, and disguises those of his own. He softens the asperities of his own creed; or, rather than lose a good subject, he will ignore doctrinal distinctions, and let down the fence if the gate be too narrow for his admission. He will spend as much time as, by the Divine blessing, would result in the conversion of a sinner, in efforts to convince a man of the scriptural character of some punctilio in worship or government, and exaggerate its importance, so as to make it stand side by side with the great fundamentals of Christianity, merely to get him over to his party. He will compass sea and land to make

one proselyte, though after he is made he may not appear to be two-fold more the child of God than he was before his denominational change. He will rejoice more over such a conquest than over ninety and nine captives from the ranks of the common foe. His encroachments upon others awaken a spirit of retaliation in them, and hence come wars and fightings among us. And such battles! Merciful Heaven! What scenes do we sometimes witness! Learning, (and ignorance, oftener, perhaps,) talents, zeal, time, money, in profuse abundance, are devoted to this ungracious work; one regiment in the sacramental host of God's elect turning its arms against another, as if the ranks of the common enemy were all subdued, and there were no other means left to test the chivalry and keep alive the martial virtues of the militant Church. The whole tribe of proselyters would do well to remember that triumphs were never decreed by the Roman senate to any but those who had gained a conquest in routing the external foes of the empire, and adding to its substantial greatness. It were comparatively easy to excite an intestine broil, a civil war, and then show great bravery in suppressing it; but the hero of such an enterprise need not expect to be rewarded with the honors of a triumph. It is a sorry business for professed ministers of the Prince of peace to be going about beating the men-servants and maidens belonging to the common Master; or prowling about the folds of other shepherds in quest of such impressible subjects as may be

considered available to their sly manœuvres. Others may labor and pray for the conversion of men from sin to righteousness: *their* province is to steal away the converts from those who have been the instruments of their conversion, and then make a show of them openly, glorying in what right-thinking, catholic-spirited Christians consider their shame. This spirit, we repeat, is essentially schismatic. It is the eye saying to the hand, "I have no need of thee;" and the hand saying to the feet, "I have no need of you." Whatever concessions and professions it may sometimes make for effect, its boast is,

"The temple of the Lord are we,
And heathens all beside."

It arrogates to itself a monopoly of Christianity—delivering all others to Satan, not for the destruction of the flesh, but for the damnation of the spirit, in the day of the Lord Jesus. It has nothing better for "irreverent dissenters" than uncovenanted mercy, which, if we may judge from their uncharitable spirit and creed, does not materially differ from covenanted wrath. The distinct pronunciation of their shibboleth—paltry as it may be, and, for the matter of that, most likely a miserably barbarous *patois*—is of more consequence than the capacity to speak fluently the language of Canaan. A man may confessedly hold the great substantial principles of Christianity, and his life may be holy, corresponding to his profession, but he must not be allowed any rest until he shall have entered some

self-styled catholic Church, out of which it is very questionable if there be any salvation. This arrogant spirit of bigotry is the mother of strife and division: it is antagonistic to the spirit of love, which is the grand cement of Christian union.

“Ye different sects, who all declare,
‘Lo, here is Christ!’ or, ‘Christ is there!’
Your stronger proofs divinely give,
And show me where the *Christians* live.
Your claim, alas! ye cannot prove—
Ye want the genuine mark of love.”

All dogmatical compromises are prejudicial to Christian union. They may seem to be adapted to its promotion; but they are not. I must not wait till a man ignores any of his principles which may chance to be hostile to mine, before I accredit his Christianity; nor must he do so toward me. If he profess to believe the Bible, which is the only standard of faith and morals, and if his life do not belie his profession, I must acknowledge him as a Christian, without demanding him to cover over some of his views of the teachings of the Bible. He may entertain principles which in my case would be inconsistent with faith—in other words, I should be forced to abjure the Bible before I could subscribe his peculiar creed—nevertheless, I must not forthwith denounce him as a heretic, having no part nor lot in the matter of Christianity. On the other hand, Christian charity does not require me to suppress my views of the teachings of the Bible, for fear of giving offence to him, or for the purpose of

securing his society and friendship. It is rather my duty to profess exactly what I believe, and to encourage others to do the same. Nothing is more conducive to settled peace and harmony than a candid expression of all our principles. Let there be no keeping back—no covering over—no subscribing to articles we do not believe. It would greatly facilitate the work of harmonizing the heterogeneous elements which make up the Catholic Church in the world, if every man would honestly profess what he believes. Let all Christians rally around the creed which most nearly expresses their views of Scripture doctrine and Church polity, letting the latter succumb to the former, in case there should be no Church holding the views of both doctrine and polity which any one may prefer. I may be at liberty to submit to any one of several modes of Church government and the like, when I am not at liberty to endorse any doctrine which I believe to be false, or to virtually deny any that I believe to be true. There can be no fellowship between truth and error; and any ecclesiastical union that is based on a compromise of this sort is bound to come to naught. Until Christians can be both of one heart and one mind, let them accredit the truth which may be in each other's creed and the piety which may be in each other's life; love one another as disciples of a common Master; help one another on toward a common heaven; but not attempt to merge all into one external fellowship—until it can be done without doing violence to one

another's principles—and run the risk of schismatical janglings and contentions in an attempt to avoid sectarian divisions. He is a stranger to the spirit of Christian charity who will recognize none as Christians who are not of his party.

Nearly allied to dogmatical compromises are mechanical combinations, if we may so style them. In these the doctrinal differences of Christians are recognized, but provision is made for them in a scheme of catholic comprehension. The theory is a vague one; it cannot very well be defined. Many excellent men—*e. g.*, Grotius, Baxter, Bridgman, Hale, Tillotson, Stillingfleet—have labored at it, but in vain. As individuals cannot, with a good conscience, profess a faith which they do not believe, so Churches cannot merge themselves in a union which recognizes their various platforms, but makes no adequate provision for them. How can Papists, Greeks, Armenians, Nestorians, Anglicans, Lutherans, the various classes of Calvinists, Arminians, Socinians, Baptists, etc., form one body? They must first recognize each other's claim to a true ecclesiastical *status*; and it is not likely that this will be done for some time to come. If it be said that all “evangelical,” in opposition to “non-evangelical” bodies may form an alliance of friendship and defence, the question comes up, Who shall draw the line between the evangelical and the non-evangelical? And how far shall the union between the former extend? What shall it comprehend? A meeting in one common delegated synod, occa-

sional exchange of pulpits, inter-communion at the Lord's table? Very well: we are prepared for that at any time. But let not too much be expected from councils, even if they are ecumenical and free. "I never yet," says Lord Bacon, "saw good end of any council; for councils abate not ill things, but rather increase them." Be that as it may: let us not delay our efforts to heal the schisms in the body of Christ till all "evangelical Christians" are ready to coöperate with us. There are thousands whom we honor as ministers and members of the Church of Christ who will not look upon us in that light: it will be a long time, if ever, before they will do so. As to the notion that small societies in sparse communities should disband, and form one catholic communion, which would be able to present an unbroken front to the world, maintain the ministry in a becoming manner, and promote other interests which in a divided state must be left to suffer, all we have to say is this, that on the score of economy, and for many social reasons, such a union is greatly desirable; but it is hazardous to attempt it until there is a substantial agreement in doctrinal views. Until then such a union would be factitious: it would promote rather than prevent discord. The minister of such a conglomerate Church cannot preach to the satisfaction of all. If he is a Calvinist, and honestly preaches his views of "the doctrines of grace," his Arminian hearers will be scandalized at what they call the "horrible decree." If he is an Arminian, his Calvinistic hearers will be

displeased with his scheme of conditional salvation. If he is a Baptist, who is to baptize the children of the Pedobaptist members? If not a Baptist, how can those of that faith and order ignore what they call "believers' baptism?" If—— But there is scarcely an end to questions of this sort, and there is no satisfactory answer to them. As to the differences among Christians in regard to Church polity, they may be compromised without any sacrifice of truth. A Presbyterian may belong to a Prelatical Church, or a Prelatist may belong to a Congregational, etc.: we could belong to any of them, as we do not see any precise model laid down in the Scripture. We do see what we think is a sharply-defined scheme of Christian doctrine, but we do not discover any such scheme of Church government. We have our preferences; but they would not stand in the way of an organic union, if other things were ready for it. But suppose one section of a community really believe in the Divine right of a third order of ministers called bishops; another in the Divine right of presbytery; another in congregational independency, as a *sine quâ non* of a true Church: can these diverse elements be compounded into one homogeneous whole? It would seem not: the differences in this case are grave, like those of the dogmatic class. To force a union of such discordant materials would be more disastrous than to suffer the diverse sectarian organizations to strive for existence in their isolated, not to say antagonist, relations. The truth must never be sacri-

ficed on the altar of conventional expediency. We revert to the sentiment: He who cannot love another whom he has reason to believe is a Christian, because he differs from him in some particulars, gives sorry proof of his interest in Christianity. There is a large margin for Christian union outside of ecclesiastical platforms and formal fellowship in worship: let us make good use of it, until the area of union shall be enlarged by the decrease of doctrinal and other differences. The practical wisdom of Lord Verulam speaks forth on this subject: "In Church matters, the substance of doctrine is immutable, and so are the general rules of government; but for rites and ceremonies, and for the particular hierarchies, policies, and disciplines of Churches, they be left at large. And, therefore, it is good we return unto the ancient bounds of unity in the Church of God: which was, one faith, one baptism; and not one hierarchy, one discipline; and that we observe the leagué of Christians, as it is penned by our Saviour; which is in substance of doctrine this: 'He that is not with us, is against us;' but in things indifferent, and but of circumstance, this: 'He that is not against us, is with us.' In these things, so as the general rules be observed, that Christ's flock be fed; that there be a succession of bishops and ministers, which are the prophets of the New Testament; that there be a due and reverent use of the power of the keys; that those that preach the gospel, live of the gospel; that all things be done in order and with decency, and the like;

the rest is left to the holy wisdom and spiritual discretion of the master-builders and inferior builders in Christ's Church; as it is excellently alluded by that father that noted that Christ's garment was without seam; and yet the Church's garment was of divers colors; and thereupon setteth down for a rule, *in veste varietas sit, scissura non sit.*"

Many persons, on account of social affinities, æsthetic tastes, and the like, may be able to harmonize in worship better with a sect holding theological views which they do not believe than with one whose doctrines they do believe; but a proper regard to the sovereignty of truth will not allow any one to suffer his Church relation to be affected by considerations of this class. It may be admitted that some nations have a proclivity to certain confessions, and some to others; *e. g.*, the Celtic nations to Romanism, the Teutonic to Protestantism, etc. Guizot, indeed, has advanced the opinion that if the French be Christians at all, they must be Roman Catholics: in like manner, many think the Scotch must be Calvinists. We do not adopt views of this sort. Men of all nations and types of character have, or may acquire, the capacity to ascertain the truth, and when *that* shall have free course, it will run and be glorified. Let the "idols of the tribe, den, market, and theatre," as Bacon calls them, be cast to the moles and the bats, and all men will see the truth in its own light, and with one mind and one mouth glorify its Divine Author.

All impatience at the gradual approximation to

union must be suppressed. This is the bane of the Church in our age and clime. We are impatient to witness results. The kingdom of God must come with observation. We are not content to cast our seed in the earth, and sleep and wake, night and day, trusting in the arrangements of Providence for the production of first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear: we are restless until we see it grow: we are continually unearthing the seed to discover whether or not it has begun to germinate. This betrays weakness—a want of faith in Him who has promised to send the sunshine and the showers in their season, and who has given us the surest guaranty that our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord. He will make his work appear unto his servants, and his glory unto their children. We should, indeed, expect results: we are to sow in hope; but this very principle rules out all the reasonings of unbelief which so frequently render inoperative the little effort which we put forth for God. We do not, indeed, see any warrant in Scripture for the postponement of our hopes to some millennial period, when, by his personal presence on earth, Christ shall gather together in one his scattered flock. We look for no other dispensation after this, but that in which mortality will be swallowed up of life. We expect “the latter-day glory of the Church;” but that will rather be an effect than the cause of Christian union. Christians must be united far more than they are at present, before that day shall dawn. Let us hasten it by all avail-

able means, but let us not be discouraged, and fretful, and impatient, because of its slow development.

We need hardly say, in conclusion, that prayer is one of the grand conditions of union. Our great Master has set us the example in his sacerdotal prayer, which we would do well to study: "That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." It would, indeed, be silly and profane to pray for union without endeavoring to answer our own prayers, by doing all in our power to restore the unity of the Spirit. But then it is the Spirit himself that unites believers' hearts in one. "The love of the Spirit" is that great solvent which, as on the day of Pentecost, must melt the heterogeneous elements into one mass. The Holy Ghost can enlighten all our minds, so that we may see light in the Divine light. He can rectify the obliquities of our intellect, so that we may all discover the truth, and "with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." He can shed abroad the love of God in all our hearts, so that loving him that begat, we shall love all those who are begotten of him. He is never more normally exercising his economical functions than when he is developing in believers the test and proof of discipleship: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." It is needless to add that the Spirit will not be given in this fulness of his grace unless we

are instant in prayer. There is no case in which the reflex, subjective influence of prayer is more powerful and available than in this. Let one Christian pray fervently for another, and he cannot very readily bite and devour him. If he wants God to bless him, he will try to bless him too. He will have an interest in his brother's prosperity because his prayers are at stake—they have been enlisted in his welfare. He will feel kindly toward him, speak charitably of him, deal generously by him. He will magnify his virtues, palliate his faults, bear his burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. The true catholic spirit mourns over any troubles and reverses which befall any part of the heritage of Christ, and rejoices in its success and prosperity. A Christian of this type considers the latter as an answer to his own prayers, and he feels correspondent sentiments of gratitude and joy. Christ is preached, and that with saving effect; and no matter by whom, he therein rejoices, yea, and will rejoice. It was a beautiful practice of the late catholic-spirited Dr. Johns, of Baltimore, whenever he passed a house of worship of any sect, to lift up his heart to God in prayer that he would distil upon the pastor and congregation that worshipped there the continual dew of his blessing! Such a man could not very well be a bigot. He believed that outside of his sect there were men who loved Christ; and he could say, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." How such prayers enlarge the heart! They prepare us to give

and to receive the *tessaræ* of Christian friendship. They fan the flame of love in the soul. And the spirit of love is more available than controversies, platforms, conventions, and all else, for the promotion of the truth in which we are to be made one. It is thus that the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace. "We are brethren," said the peace-loving Bishop Hall—to men, by the way, who had not much to do with peace, and did not pray very fervently for it—"We are brethren, let us also be associates. We are Christians, let us be of one soul. We are one body, let us also be of one mind. By that tremendous name of the Almighty God—by the pious and gentle bosom of our common mother—by our own souls—by the most holy compassions of Jesus Christ our Saviour—aim at peace, brethren: enter into peace; that, laying aside all party spirit and evil affections, we may all come to a happier agreement in the same truth." It is thus that we must "all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effect-

ual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

All other conditions of catholic union will readily be fulfilled, and this blessed fellowship in the Spirit be soon enjoyed, when all believers shall from their hearts exclaim :

"Many are we now and one,
We who Jesus have put on :
Names, and sects, and parties fall ;
Thou, O Christ, art all in all."

"O Almighty God, who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone : Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable unto thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth : Send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee. Grant this for thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

CHAPTER XII.

CHURCH UNITY.

THE following essay is contributed to this work by REV. WILLIAM H. LEWIS, D. D., of Brooklyn, N. Y. Dr. Lewis is the author of a very able argument on Christian Union, published in 1858, in a handsome little volume of 116 pages. It is just such a book as is demanded by the times, and ought to be in every Christian family. Dr. Lewis is known as one of the most chaste and beautiful writers of the age, and is not less distinguished for his piety, zeal, and liberality. His fraternizing and catholic spirit towards other evangelical Churches is not so savory to the extreme High-Church party of his own denomination, nor to exclusive sectarians of other Churches, but it is not less acceptable to God on that account. Like the other able contributors to this volume, Rev. Dr. T. O. Summers, Rev. Dr. Stow, Hon. A. Van Dyck, and others, he is fully willing to go wherever truth leads and duty calls. He is, like them, loyal to his own Church, (the Protestant Episcopal,) but not less loyal to the true

Church Catholic. Had all our ministers the peace-loving and peace-making spirit of Dr. Lewis, the scattered flock of Christ would sooner be gathered into one fold. We commend his clear and lucid argument to the impartial and prayerful reading of all into whose hand it may come.

CHURCH UNITY—SCRIPTURAL PATTERN.

“And there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.”—John x. 16.

AMONG the hopeful signs of the times, and cheering indications of the near approach of the millennial day, we may rank the general and increasing desire for union among Christ's followers.

In a late number of an English monthly, as many as five recent publications upon the subject, issued in different parts of the world, were placed at the head of an article in review of them, and were spoken of by the reviewer as “disclosing a state of things the most hopeful, in some respects, which has visited the Church of Christ for many years.”

We want discussion on these great points, that we may see how nearly we can agree, how much of union there is already among us, how much can be yielded for the sake of peace without any sacrifice of conscience, and that we may know the many and powerful reasons which should draw us together as the heart of one man. If there were as much effort to unite as there is to magnify points of difference, we should soon be united. Were a convention of the wisest and holiest of each denomination to as-

semble—excluding controversialists, usually not the wisest and holiest—no doubt they could soon find some common platform on which to stand.

We must, as much as possible, turn away from the past, except as we mourn over it. Quarrels in families never end so long as one criminating reference to old offences is indulged, and wars among nations are usually settled with little allusion to the disputes which caused them. Let bygones be bygones. We have all sinned against each other. Which has offended most deeply, let God judge. We must look candidly at each other's position, make all due allowance for conscientious difficulties in the way of union, admit the features of special excellence in each other's system—for each has some, and no one has all excellences—and be ready to sacrifice, for peace' sake, much that we love and deem truly desirable, if it can be done with a good conscience.

The great point with every Christian should be, What is the will of God on this subject? We have become so familiar with our divisions, that, like the wretched victims of the goitre, we regard that as a beauty which is indeed a sad blemish and a dangerous excrescence. We hear more of the advantage of a multiplicity of sects than of lament for it. Nay, we even go so far as to think it according to the mind and will of God that there should be a variety of denominations, and that this is a part of the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. Until we divest ourselves of all such impressions,

no plea for Christian union will have much weight. Let us turn to the word of God, to learn his mind and will.

We take the position, then, that God designed his people to be joined together in visible as well as spiritual communion and fellowship, and to be one in doctrine, ministry, and worship; and that the present divided state of the Church must therefore be loathsome and deeply adhorrent in his sight.

We might infer as much as this from the character of God as a God of truth, which is one and indivisible, and as a God of peace; but we have his will more explicitly revealed.

Under the old dispensation, the Church was one in visible form as well as in spiritual union, and that was a Church modelled by God's own hand. In all that was not of its very nature local and temporary, in all that was essential and could remain, it was a shadow and type of the Christian Church. Surely we cannot assert that its visible unity was a feature which was to vanish away. It was one which was to remain in Christ's Church militant. It will distinguish the Church triumphant.

Every attempt to form a separate worship under that dispensation was condemned. When the tribes beyond Jordan with pious intent set up their memorial altar, they were fiercely charged with purposes of schism, but most earnestly deprecated the suspicion. Jeroboam has his name ever coupled with an epithet of infamy for the matter of the worship at Bethel and Dan, and the sin into which he

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led his people was the cause of the early and long-continued judgment on the ten tribes. When in Babylon, with their temple in utter ruin, and a total suspension of that sacrificial system so essential to their worship, there was no attempt on the part of the Jews to set up an altar, but all prayed toward Jerusalem. And the Samaritan Temple was pronounced by our Lord schismatical.

And yet there was as much then to justify separation as there ever has been since. When such as Caiaphas and the sons of Eli ministered, when idols were set up in the chambers of the Temple, and when for seventy years the temple itself lay in ruins, there was surely, if ever, good reason for establishing new altars. But no, they were not permitted. Our Lord upheld the authority and attended the ministrations of his own murderers. The temple was the one home of God's people. The synagogue was everywhere open to the Jew, and often to the Christian Jew. And when the kingdom of God was taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles, it was only after the most explicit revelations from God, and long resistance to them on the part of the apostles, that the separation was made, and the new worship of the Christian Church arose.

In the New Testament we have the clearest evidence that the unity of the Church of the old dispensation was to have continuance. Our Lord speaks of the whole body of his people as sheep of one fold under one shepherd. In that solemn prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St.

John, our Divine Master repeats again and again the petition that his people might all be one, as if his soul was burdened with the foresight of the evils of our divisions. The figures under which his Church is set forth are all expressive of unity; as, for instance, a city compact together, a kingdom, a body with many members, a feast with many guests, a tree with many branches, and a temple on one and the same foundation. St. Paul exhorts Christians to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and says: "There is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." To the Corinthians he says: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." To those who named themselves as his own followers, he says indignantly: "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" If he was so moved by little party preferences, which did not amount to such a separation as to divide the Church at Corinth into sects that would not commune together, and among which Paul, Cephas, and Apollos could not freely minister, how would he be affected by our unchristian divisions? And elsewhere he says: "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, con-

trary to the doctrine ye have learned; and avoid them."

Nor do we find any instance, so long as the inspired preachers of the gospel remained on earth, in which there was such a separation among Christ's true disciples that there was no free fellowship in the ministry and sacraments and in worship. There were strifes and divisions, but they amounted not to an alienation such as we now witness. There were gross heresies also, but these were without. So long as the first founders of the Church lived, it was visibly and truly one. Nor did those inspired men make any provision for after separations. No doubt there may be extreme cases where it is right to withdraw from others, as in the Reformation of the Church of England, which was rather, however, the throwing off of an usurper's yoke by a whole body of people than a division, or where doctrines grossly unscriptural are imposed, when the sin of schism rests on those who impose them, not on those who withdraw; but the gospel makes no provision for such cases. It declares God's will that the Church should be one, just as it declares the duty of submission to rulers and to parents, with no reserve or limit, and men must take the responsibility of saying whether and when a case may arise where rulers and parents may be resisted, or Christians separate—a responsibility not to be assumed but in extreme necessity. There is no ideal of such a Church as we now have, in the Old Testament Scriptures, or the New.

Were our Lord again to come among us, as in the days of his flesh, who can doubt but that he would manifest the sternest displeasure at the divided state of his Church, and that this evil would more attract his attention than the condition of the heathen or the slow progress of his gospel? Where would he go? Among which of the many bodies of Christians would he find his home? Would he pitch his tent away from all of them, and call unto himself the faithful from among all, and so build again the tabernacle which had fallen down? A kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, was his own inspired saying, and a city or house divided against itself cannot stand. Even Satan's empire could not stand against divided counsels; how much less the Church, whose first law is love and peace and unity! No one can doubt that if the mind and will of Christ could now be expressed, he would direct us, as we love his name, to find at once some means of restoring the visible union of the Church.

THE EVILS OF DISUNION.

“For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.”
—Judges v. 16.

The pernicious influence of our divisions upon the interests of Christ's kingdom presents itself in so many and strong lights, and is so obvious, that it would be hardly needful to dwell upon the subject, were it not for the strange notion already referred

to, as held by some, that our schisms strengthen the cause of Christ, and tend to the purity and preservation of his holy religion.

If God intended his Church to be one, it is certain that his design, if carried out, must be more conducive to strength, purity, and prosperity than any such fancied improvement on his pattern as is to be found in division. God knew what was in man, and constituted his Church for man; and had it been necessary to have one sect of Christians as a watch against another, lest the truth of the gospel should be corrupted, or one form of subsistence for men of a certain cast of mind, and another for those of different tastes and temperaments, we should undoubtedly have had two baptisms instead of one, and hints or rules for separate denominations for their own government and in their intercourse with each other. Could its divinely-constituted unity be restored, no doubt the Church would be every way the gainer in purity, strength, and prosperity. Should it be objected that if God had cared greatly for unity in doctrine, worship, and visible fellowship, he would have furnished us with the working model or pattern of such a Church, as he did of the tabernacle to Moses; we reply, He has probably done so; and if we would be willing to look for it where, by common consent, we look for law and example in many other matters, to the times immediately succeeding the apostles, we might find that our Lord did not remain on earth for forty days after his resurrection, instructing his disciples

in the things pertaining to his kingdom, without leaving them forms as well as counsels of unity.

But the evident evils of divisions show clearly that they are not of God. Look at their influence on missions. To appreciate it in reference to the foreign field, we ought to stand on heathen soil, in the midst of and confronting some millions of idolaters. Slight differences between Christian brethren there dwindle away. The contrast between the worst form of Christianity and the best of heathenism is so great, and the contest with the latter so fearful, that the aid of any Christian brother is welcomed, and, practically, there is more of fraternal feeling and coöperation among missionaries abroad than among those who send them. Dr. Livingstone says that all classes of Christians find that sectarian rancor soon dies out when they are working together among and for the real heathen. The heralds of the cross amid pagans would be foremost in entreating us to be reconciled to each other. We may yet feel a like pressure. God may force us to unite by letting forth such a flood of infidelity and indifferentism as will compel us to come together, just as upon some island, in time of inundation, animals, wild and tame, cluster together with men, unharmed and unharmed; or as those of every persuasion draw near each other when their ship is about to be engulfed in the stormy ocean. A furious persecution may be the medicine for our divisions, unless prophylactic means avert the prescription. At present we have not enough of opposition

to lead us to seek the strength that is gained in union; and perhaps the enemy is wiser to let us straggle in bands, and in security and ease, than to force us to unite; but, found of him divided as we now are, when the onslaught comes, the odds will be fearfully against us.

In Shanghai no less than ten distinct missionary organizations—not all, however, but for the most part, of different denominations—are carrying on their work. This is given as a single illustration of our mode of operations. What could we expect but that the heathen would say, “Agree among yourselves what the gospel is, ere you preach it to us. You call yours a religion of love; you boast that all are one in Christ; and yet you cannot meet together at the table of your common Lord, nor own each other as ministers of Jesus.” Surely the heathen must be perplexed and the hands of missionaries weakened by our divisions. Rome has the advantage of us here in missions among the pagans.

Home missions suffer, though perhaps in a less degree. In the rising villages of the West we find all the denominations of the East, with churches half filled, half supported, jealous of each other, dragging upon missionary societies, and often basing their appeals for aid on motives of rivalry. If all were one in Christ, a single church might accommodate all, leaving men and means for perishing souls elsewhere. A vast amount of money now expended on the machinery of rival societies for

papers and agencies might be saved by union; and the larger expenditure at present required may be set down as so much waste or misuse of our Lord's money; and of money, too, hardly gathered, and needed a thousand-fold for a multitude of objects.

But all this is nothing compared with the fact that, by our want of unity, we are losing the Divine blessing in labors for evangelizing the world. We are like rival clans, united, indeed, against a common foe, but carrying on our warfare each in his own way, with no concert with each other, and improving every interval for a private skirmish with one another. Suppose that a great captain, like Washington, had been invited in our war for liberty to put himself at the head of our troops, while every State was acting independently: would he not have wisely and prudently declined the doubtful honor until a congress had brought all under one flag and into united effort? It is common to represent the various bodies of Christians as only so many regiments of the same army; but if there was no more unity among the regiments of a brigade than there is among sects of Christians, a general at their head would find himself in a strange position. If Christ is to conduct the armies of the cross to the conquest of the world, we may be sure that it will not be while they are in their present position; for such a straggling, disconnected army might well shame and discourage any leader.

Why is it that modern missions are so unsucces-

ful, compared with those of the first preachers of the gospel? We have the same word of God, the same Holy Spirit, men of piety equal to that of many, if not of any, in the apostolic age, preachers ready to suffer martyrdom for Christ, more money for missions, greater facilities of travel, the aid of the press, less violence on the part of the heathen; and often protection from it by the power of Christian sway, while superstitions, then vigorous, are now tottering to decay; and Christianity, the assailant, then in its infancy, has now the matured strength of manhood and the experience of a thousand contests. Every way the advantage seems to be with us, but not the success. Why is this? The early Church was not a divided Church. Every time the Holy Ghost was poured out in those large effusions, by which thousands were converted in a day, we are told in reiterated and strong language that believers "were all with one accord in one place;" that "they lifted up their voice to God with one accord," and that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." There were divisions in those days, but only such as may spring up now in any congregation that still holds together; or like family jars, ending not in alienation and estrangement. Apollos was not silenced nor shunned, though he knew and preached only the baptism of John, and was ignorant of the great atonement, and of the gift of the Spirit; nor were Jews separated from Gentiles, though the former still circumcised their children and clung to their

ritual, while the latter came not under the yoke of ordinances. They had not learned in that day to set up a new Church upon every little variance. The Holy Dove was not frightened away by contentions; and we must return to that primitive unity ere we can hope for their success. They, united, preached the gospel to the whole world ere the last apostle died. We, divided, during centuries, have left millions to die without ever having heard of the name of Jesus. We weep and lament over the slow progress of the gospel. We redouble our prayers and our fasts; but God might say to us as to Joshua, "Get thee up! Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned: therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies." We must put away the accursed thing, and return to apostolic unity, ere we can hope that God will go before us to victory, or pour out that residue of the Spirit foretold in his word for the conversion of the nations, of which outpouring the Pentecostal gift was a pledge and a type, both in the results and the means by which they were sought and gained. The temple of Janus must be again shut, ere the Prince of Peace will make his second advent to reign over all the earth.

In the present aspect of affairs, there seems to be evidently something lacking to any great successes of the gospel. It has been preached to all nations for a witness unto them. Popery and Islamism, twins in birth, though strong in numbers, bear marks of dissolution, and seem about ready to expire

together. It is not covetousness that withholds the blessing, for never was so much given for the cause of Christ. Large societies are sending forth their Bibles and tracts by millions. And yet we meet not with corresponding success. Progress commensurate with our means is not made in missions. In this country, not enough candidates for the ministry offer themselves to supply the vacancies by deaths. Revivals have in a great measure died out: questionable, indeed, at the best, yet once greatly relied upon by some as a mode of increase. Accessions to the communion do hardly equal losses; old instrumentalities are receiving a divided support. Denominations are dividing more and more. Infidelity and insubordination to civil rule are frightfully on the increase. The masses of society are festering in corruption, unreached and unhealed. India, Africa, the Turkish Empire, Japan, and China, with more than half of earth's population in their territories, have been successively laid open for the introduction of Christianity, but the Christian hosts are not ready to occupy the fields Providence has made free to them. Something seems to be wanting to our success. God has some controversy with us. There is an Achan in the camp. What do we need? What must be done ere our Joshua (Jesus) will lead us on to the conquest of the world? We need "all to be one that the world may believe."

Some have thought that the union of Christians in the great societies for Bible and tract distribution

was to be the union, and all the union, for the world's conversion; but these themselves have hardly escaped from being rent asunder, and schisms among Christians have multiplied during the day of such societies. This is not the oneness which is to be followed by the world's belief in Jesus. Could all who love the Lord be brought together in visible union and fellowship, we might hope that the glad cry would soon arise, "Hallelujah! for the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever." God must convert us to each other before the world can be converted. "Bless us, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations."

Prophecy connects the millennial glory with the perfect unity of the Church, so that it is vain to look for the one without the other. "The watchmen shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion." "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." "I will give unto them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever." "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." The dew of Hermon, emblem of the Spirit's grace, descends on a city at unity with itself. It may be said that the millennium is to heal our dissensions, and to precede their healing. Nay, certainly, at the farthest, the latter-day glory and the healing of strife are to be coetaneous; but the better view is,

that the latter will immediately precede the former. If the world's conversion were to be altogether by a Divine interposition, we might conclude that the healing of dissension would be put off, and included in that great work; but if the Church is to be prepared and used for that conquest, if Christians are not only "to look for, but hasten the coming (the true reading of 2 Peter iii. 12) of the day of God," then our unhappy divisions must first be healed ere Christ can reign upon earth. Solomon's prosperous kingdom, extending to the utmost bounds of the promised inheritance, was a type of the universal sovereignty of Christ, and David, the man of war, must die ere Solomon could reign, or that temple which went up without sound of axe or hammer could be erected.

And our position with regard to each other is inconsistent and humiliating. It is sad enough in respect to the worldly; and we can hardly resent such a taunting reply as the elder Adams gave, who, when asked to contribute to foreign missions, said, "Here are four or five churches in our little village, whose ministers and members cannot commune or worship together, nor scarcely speak to each other: go and convert them to Christ, and then send the gospel abroad." We know that our divisions are lowering us in the eyes of worldlings, and that reason shows them that they are utterly inconsistent with the religion we profess. And we ourselves feel the evil, apologize for it as we may. There is not a Christian of any of the names usually

called evangelical but that assents to every article of the Apostles' and Nicene Creed, and can unite in every petition of the Litany of the Episcopal service, chant the Te Deum, sing Toplady's "Rock of Ages," and Heber's missionary hymn, and utter the Lord's Prayer; and yet, united on all these points, united in regard to the helplessness of fallen man, the need of an atonement, the supreme deity of the Eternal Son, the Trinity, the Spirit's new-creating and sanctifying work, the resurrection, the judgment, we separate on some one point, and can hold no fellowship with one another. Few are so exclusive in their faith that they will not freely acknowledge the true and deep piety of many in every other pale, and admire their zeal in good works, nor do they doubt that God will open to them the gates of heaven; but the doors of the Church on earth must not be opened to them. God owns them as his children, but we must not own them as brethren; at least, not as brethren fully recognized. We make our creed far more exclusive than we believe God will make his own holy abode. We cannot at present have it otherwise, but these are strange inconsistencies. The Church ought to include "all who hold the Head," all who are washed in the blood of Christ and sanctified by his Spirit, all who will, as we may reasonably hope, inherit eternal life; but we reduce it within narrower bounds, so far, at least, as our action can go. It is vain to say that we are all one in spirit, though not in outward form; for if one in

spirit, we should be one in Church fellowship, nor can we ever be truly one in spirit until in outward relationship we are one. It is vain to say that we love each other when we commune not together, nor worship together, nor acknowledge each other's ministry. We feel the evil. We make awkward excuses for it. We are embarrassed by it in our intercourse with each other. And there are but few true Christians who would not be glad to be relieved from it, and to find some mode by which this left-handed brotherhood might be exchanged for the full and free fellowship of the gospel.

Looking at our subject in the light of God's word and of the teachings of experience and reason, it is not too much to say, that if all true Christians could now unite in one visible and holy fellowship, the last great hindrance to the world's conversion would be taken away, Satan would leap affrighted from his throne, Jesus would put himself at the head of our hosts for final victory, and the smile of a reconciled God would soon rest upon every part of our sin-accursed earth. Who can doubt that such a movement towards each other would be almost immediately followed by the conquest of the world for Christ? Think of it, ye Christian men. Pray over it. And if the assertion seem well founded, then certainly ye will not rest till some way shall be discovered of restoring unity to the Church, and victory to her banners. The breaking down of party lines everywhere, and the rending asunder of religious bodies, seem to indicate that God has the

purpose in view of building up some new form of ecclesiastical subsistence, comprehending perhaps within its fold all who love the Lord Jesus, and mark the present time as favorable for discussion; while our own country, untrammelled by any union of Church and State, is a hopeful field for negotiating terms of peace.

OBSTACLES TO CHRISTIAN UNION.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions—and avoid them.”—Rom. xvi. 17.

Some of the obstacles to Christian union will next be noticed.

A hindrance of greater weight than worth is to be found in the characteristic peculiarities, not of doctrine, but of manner, habits, taste, modes of thought and expression—a certain *ethos*—belonging to each denomination, that, like the garb and customs of nations, separates more than any substantial and real differences. It is true there are such ecclesiastical characteristics, and that they are so marked that an observing eye may often discover at a glance to what persuasion a stranger cleric belongs, or even in what seminary of his own Church he was educated. And this feeling of strangeness, as we go among brethren, is so repulsive, as to make us doubt whether the substance of true religion is to be found where its outward forms are so unlike our own, and may operate strongly against the idea of union. But all this would soon wear off by contact. Like the various races of our land, among whom a

wise policy forbids all old national badges and organizations, and which, in pursuing it, become thoroughly American in a few generations, Christians of every name, if separating walls were broken down, would soon, by attrition, lose, as pebbles do on the sea-shore, angular and repulsive roughness, and Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites meet with one accord in the same temple, declaring the wonderful works of God.

Some supposed advantages of disunion have already been referred to as making many contented with it, such as the watch which Christians of various sects keep upon the Bible, preserving it from corruption, and the light which is thrown upon truth by their controversies. In further reply to such arguments, we ask, Is it necessary then for our great King to adopt the policy of earthly monarchs who play off one great vassal against another, and so preserve their own throne and rule by balancing such rivalries? Do we find any indication of such a policy in God's word? Was Israel more pure when the tribes separated, or is the Church sounder in doctrine now than in her days of pristine unity? Our jealous contests are a poor substitute for holy love to God and to each other. Shame on the Christian who shall even mention as an advantage that which ought to humble us in the dust. Men might as well congratulate themselves over the value of the charred sticks of some pleasant dwelling once their common abode, but which their own hands have fired.

Connected with this, we may refer to the avowal that our separate organizations promote peace and are necessary to it. We are told that we never shall have peace, until all are allowed to serve God in their own way, and we can agree to differ. The anecdote given by Dr. Hewitt, in a Methodist Conference, of a good deacon who thought the best security against contentions among Christians of different names was in a fence ten rails high, is repeated with much approbation. And, indeed, so long as there is a real separation, such a preservative of peace would be a wise one, for a sure way of creating quarrels among neighbors is to cut a door of free access to each other's houses and yards. All forced intercourse, all hollow truces and patched-up treaties, and, perhaps we may add, all Christian alliances, and all exchanges of pulpits, where no visible and substantial agreement exists, though well meant, do amount to but very little, and often increase the evil of discord instead of ending it. But if all could really become one family, then the door could safely be cut, and the fences taken down. And this is the gospel remedy. It does not put this brother in one enclosure, and that in another, like vicious animals that may gore each other unless kept apart, but regards all Christ's people as sheep, which may be kept by thousands in one fold and under one shepherd. We must contrive to find a fold that will hold us all, and then to have enough of the lamb-like spirit to enable us to occupy it together. We must discover some

ground of union that we can all stand upon, so that we can call ourselves one Church—one in outward and visible form, in doctrine, in spirit, and have but one pasture, though there be large liberty in feeding in it, or else our contentions will never cease. To separate on every difference of doctrine, and to set up a new Church on account thereof, and then to ask to be let alone in it, never has tended to peace, never will.

Denominational self-complacency and boasting are obstacles to union. The Bishops of the Episcopal Church, in connection with a recent movement, caution against laudation of self and disparagement of others. We of that Church need this counsel from our fathers. Our brethren of other names probably need it. The evil is as old as the apostles' days, when one said, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, only that it is now more aggravated, when they of Paul and Apollos have parted entirely asunder. None of us have a perfect system, whatever its excellences; and when God shall build up again his one true Catholic Church, it will probably be with materials gathered from all existing Churches.

Judging each other by our worst features and men, is an obstacle to Christian union. The most unfaithful specimens of a Church—its ultraists, its eccentric, comet-like characters—are usually best known without, and attract most attention and comment. If there be an extremist in doctrinal matters, he is regarded as a sample of the whole;

if an ungodly professor, he is selected as the fruit of the system in point of piety; if some disgraceful procedure, which causes the good to hang their heads in sorrow and shame, that is visited upon all, as if a natural growth instead of an excrescence. If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed of one another. We touch the shore of our neighbor's possession, and finding there sand, rock, and foaming breakers; conclude that it is all naught and barren, while inland there may be a region of beauty and verdure where we ourselves might find an abode of pleasantness, in which is much to love and to desire, if but in unity and union with our own.

Over-refining upon Creeds, Platforms, Articles, and Confessions of Faith, is an obstacle to Christian union. These are designed as securities against error, and as bonds of unity; but when extended too far, they have rather embalmed and perpetuated error and stereotyped divisions. They are the mountains interposed in God's heritage, that make enemies of those who else, like kindred drops, had melted into one. They should set forth only the simple and fundamental truths of our religion as in the ancient Creeds, and perhaps the XXXIX Articles of the Episcopal Church. When doctrine true and false is once embodied in labored and multitudinous Articles of Faith, it becomes a fortress which must be defended; and when such fortresses are multiplied, they become, like those of petty clustering principalities, hindrances to the traveller on the

king's highway, and obstacles to growth, consolidation, and prosperity. We want, as in a team, just the simplest and lightest of this gearing possible, only enough to hold us together and to enable us to draw well: more would be cumbrous and a clog.

There are often great hindrances to Christian union among the clergy. Polemic divines dwell upon points of controversy until they are unduly magnified; their skill is shown in demolishing a rival, or the man of straw set up in his place; their self-importance is more magnified in being the Paul or Apollos of a party than the ministers of Christ; and, as self-seeking has had much to do with originating the new names which have superseded that honored name of Christian, which alone should be borne by Christ's followers, so in the same source do we find that which in part gives continuance to our denominational appellations. "We should soon come together," said a prominent layman of the Presbyterian Church, "were it not for the clergy;" and though the charge may not be true of them as a body, no doubt there are many among them who are great obstacles to union.

The seeming hopelessness of union is another hindrance in our way. Scarcely a Christian can be found but that will say that we ought to unite, and that it would be a blessed thing if we could; but then it will be added, It is hopeless to think of it. We have no right to speak thus. Is union desirable? Will God bless the effort to bring it

about? Is it that which we may pray for in faith as in accordance with his mind and will? Are our schisms sinful? Would Jesus, if among us, command us all to be one? Would Paul repeat his earnest warnings against divisions? What is right? What is the will of God? These are the questions we are to ask; and if it be clear that God wills that we should be one, though a great sea separate us, as we go forward it will open—though a mountain were in our way, faith would remove it or make it a plain. Better to break the broken limbs again and set them right—especially when we have such a great Physician to bless the operation with his oversight and skill—than to hobble on in this crippled way for ever. The attempt has never yet been fairly and fully made. Centuries of war in the Church have passed away without a congress for peace. Partial efforts have indeed been put forth, but the end aimed at has not been visible and substantial union, but only combination against some common foe, or for some special purpose, with no idea of compromise and sacrifice for vital and real unity; and for only such low aims, God's blessing could hardly be expected, or at least no more would be given than was sought. Never did Protestant Christians even meet to seek some plan of mutual agreement. Is not this true? Shall the sword devour for ever? Thirty years of war will bring nations to their senses, but we Christians for centuries fight on, with no cry for peace. We want a deeper conviction of the evil of our dissensions.

They are of the devil. God abhors them. Read his mind as everywhere expressed, and it is that we should all be one in Christ; nor is it hopeless to expect that we shall be. It is fixed in God's word and purpose that we shall. We must come together, and the only questions are, When, and how? questions to be easily solved when the will and the heart for the work are not wanting.

The want of prayer for Christian unity is another obstacle to its attainment. Of course, if we look upon the thing as hopeless, we shall not pray for it, unless, indeed, we happen to have a liturgy handed down from days when oneness in Christ did not seem a dream of fancy; and so are compelled to pray in every assemblage for worship, "that all who profess and call themselves Christians may hold the faith in unity of spirit, and in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." We have days of fasting and prayer for the conversion of the world; we need them far more for our conversion to each other. Bless us, O God! that thy way may be known upon earth. We do need a day when all the families of the true Israel shall mourn apart, as one that mourneth for an only son, over our unhappy divisions, and shall pray God to restore the lost unity of the Church. The very fact that none call for such a season of humiliation, shows the apathy that prevails in regard to the evils of our dissensions, and the observance of it would awaken us out of it, and call down the light and blessing we so greatly need for our deliverance. We may

discuss questions of unity, and only provoke more controversy; suggest plans but to awaken suspicion and draw forth ridicule; and faint with the desire for peace, yet die without the sight of it, unless God interpose for us; and nothing would be more likely to move his interposition than a day of humiliation, kept the wide world over, wherever there are saints that love the Lord. When a single individual in England, some years ago, proposed a concert of prayer for the conversion of the world, multitudes of every denomination assented, and are still obeying his loving behest; and there are millions of pious souls that would hail a like call to humiliation on account of our divisions, and earnestly obey it. There is now an intense longing among many of every name for that union for which we plead; and if two or three shall prevail when they agree in asking for any thing, how much more shall two or three millions prevail in pleading with one heart for that for which the last prayers of Jesus were offered, and for which he still intercedes! Let the fathers of every Church select a day; let it be, if they approve of the suggestion, the day on which Christ's blood was shed, or any other that may be better, as the season when all shall be invited to humble themselves before God, for those divisions which have rent that Church which should have been, like Christ's seamless coat, unrent. Let those aged men who have outlived the stormy passions which tend to strife, who have risen above sect and party, and who are

anxious, like their Divine Lord, to leave a legacy of peace ere they are taken away, command such an observance. None can doubt the propriety of going so far in an effort toward union. We shall all be as one in lamenting before God our unhappy divisions, and in imploring him to restore peace to the Church; and when he sees us so united in humiliation and prayer, all other desired results may be looked for in enlarged faith and hope. This inveterate and malignant evil spirit of discord which has rent the Church so long, goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting. In the present state of things among Christians, it may be premature to offer any scheme by which all may be one, but it is not premature to discuss the subject and to pray over it. The thoughts contributed now by one, and again by another, may be only as the drift-wood from a distant happy land, pointing the thoughtful observer, as he looks over the dark waters of strife, to the existence of a world known perhaps in old traditions, long lost sight of, but destined again to be reached, and prompting some one hereafter to seek a pathway to its shores. The final discoverer of a plan of union that shall be adopted, will be worthy of more honor than he who finds a new continent. But probably here, as elsewhere in all great movements, progressive steps and hints from various quarters will throw such light upon the difficult problem, that the last and successful suggestion will seem to follow as a matter of course. Thus does our God stain the pride of human glory, by making great

discoveries the result of his own providential leadings and of the actings of many minds, rather than of the wisdom or researches of single individuals. The great want now is calm discussion of the subject, and prayer.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHRISTIAN UNION, OR AN ARGUMENT FOR THE
ABOLITION OF SECTS.

THE author of the following argument for Christian union was an eminent lawyer and an eminent Christian. Those who knew him well do not hesitate to place him in the same rank with such men as Evarts, Grimke, and Wirt. He died in February, 1835, at his residence in Coxsackie, New York. Though a man of superior talents, he was never ambitious of notoriety. He was always ready to do his duty, but never wished to appear conspicuous. He was a Christian of uncommon attainments in religious experience, as well as knowledge. It could be truly said of him that he lived near to God. Sometimes for months together, in the highest sense, he walked in the light of His countenance. At such seasons, Divine communion was the element in which his mind habitually moved. So strongly were his thoughts and desires drawn heavenward, that, at every cessation of professional business, he found himself with God. Of

such things he was by no means communicative. He never loved to speak of himself, and always shunned it if he could. Yet, at times, to an intimate friend, he was willing to declare what the Lord had done for his soul. At the close of his life, his mind was in a state of perfect peace and assurance. For the last five years before his death, scarce a momentary cloud obscured his prospects; yet he was no enthusiast. No man examined more carefully the ground of his hope, nor gave a more intelligible reason of it. He abounded in prayer, and loved it. His prayers were remarkable for the confession of sin, for a *pleading* spirit, and for a childlike simplicity. He attached supreme importance to the divinity, atonement, and intercession of Christ, and the influence and power of the Spirit, as the great cardinal and practical doctrines of the Bible. He dwelt with peculiar interest and earnestness on the infinite love and grace of God in the gospel, as encouragement to prayer, and calculated to subdue the hearts of sinners to the obedience of Christ. He was entirely free from any thing like affectation in feeling; yet his emotions in prayer at times were too strong for utterance, and tears became the best expression of what passed within. Many such instances might be named, says the writer who gave a sketch of his life.

He was a Presbyterian, moderately Calvinistic, and very fixed in his doctrinal belief; yet he was tolerant toward the faith of others, and most catholic in spirit. He was a good man, full of faith and

of the Holy Ghost, gave liberally to every good cause, and abounded in every good work. Few such Christians have lived in modern times.

Mr. Van Dyck's book on Christian Union was published in the year 1835, by D. Appleton & Co., New York. Whether on account of the death of the author the same year, or that his book was too far in advance of the sectarian age in which it was written, it had but one edition. No one attempted to answer it. It is acknowledged by all who have read it to be a book of great merit. How it came into our hands is not now remembered, but that it did come into our hands the next year after its publication is well and gratefully remembered. It was at a time when we were questioning in our mind whether the present divided state of the Church was not wrong and sinful. It was the first clear and scriptural argument we had seen on the subject.

We thank the Messrs. Appleton, of New York, and also J. C. Van Dyck, Esq., of Coxsackie, New York, son of Hon. A. Van Dyck, for letters granting the free use of the whole, or such extracts as may serve the cause of Christian union. The arguments of Mr. Van Dyck are so fair, close, and lawyer-like, we feel quite sure they will be well received by the members of his profession. He says:

SHOULD our Saviour this day come down from heaven, take up his abode on earth, and in his human nature assume the immediate government

of the Church, would he look with complacency on its divisions into sects and denominations? Would his scattered followers appear in his eye as different streams, all beautifully flowing into one mighty river, or as one great army, composed of many legions, all having the same views, and harmoniously coöperating under the same counsels? Would he not rather express his sorrow and indignation that the demon of discord had been permitted to sow dissension among his disciples, and that thereby the world, instead of having been subdued into faithful subjection to his kingdom, by the united power of his forces, is yet, as to nine-tenths of it, under the dominion of heathenism, delusion, and error?

The personal advent of Christ is expected by only a small number of his professed disciples; and for all the purposes of our present subject, we may take it for granted that he will continue on his throne in heaven until his mediatorial work shall be completed; and that to the end of the world he will govern the Church by his ministers, his word, and his Spirit, and upon the principles declared in the Scriptures of everlasting truth; so that we must needs be content to answer the above inquiries from what is taught in the Bible, instead of waiting for a new revelation from the great Head of the Church, whose word, already written, endureth for ever.

Among Protestant Christians there are some who maintain that the division of the Church into sects

and denominations, instead of being detrimental, is rather advantageous to her best interests. A second class apprehend it to be injurious, but entertain so little hope of healing the division, that they give a ready ear to any flatterer that may undertake to show its advantages, and are thus kept in a state of doubt, and consequent inaction. There is another class, who seem to be convinced that the schisms in the Church are a great evil, but do not put forth a wish to have a remedy applied in any other way than by the universal prevalence of the sect to which they belong. And we are happy in the belief that there are also many among the people of God who are perfectly convinced that the rending asunder of the Church of Christ is the source of many and great evils, and that it is a flagrant breach of the unity of the Church, as constituted by its Head, and who are desiring and praying that the omniscient God may lead his children to discern and carry into effect the proper remedy. There are probably but few intelligent Christians whose minds are not, in some measure, exercised upon this important subject. A spirit of solicitude and inquiry is abroad, and the interest of the attentive disciple is increased by what he sees to be transpiring in the providence of God. The finger of the Almighty is pointing to a reunion of the Church, according to its original constitution, as the only hope of saving her from being torn into such fragments as to render it impossible to sustain her institutions.

We believe that God has graciously provided a remedy for all the evils that afflict his Church, and that the time and measure of redress depend upon the discernment and faithful exertions of his children, in an humble reliance upon his assistance. We are confident that the evil of division is palpable and intolerable, and that the remedy is obviously indicated in the word of God itself. But as the first step toward relief is to convince the serious and watchful Christian of the existence of the evil, and the next step is to point out the remedy, and show the practicability of its successful application, we make our earnest appeal to Christians of every denomination, entreating their candid and patient attention to the discussion of these momentous topics.

The Church of God was set up prior to the manifestation of Jesus Christ in the flesh; whether in Abraham, as the father of the faithful, or in the descendants of Jacob, or at what period of the Old Testament history, it is not material to our present purpose to determine. The design of God in the erection of the Church was, in the first stage of its existence, to preserve a holy seed for his worship and service in the midst of an idolatrous and wicked world; to receive and transmit to future generations the revelation of God's will to man in his fallen state; and ultimately to diffuse the knowledge and influence of religion throughout the whole earth.

Although the Holy Spirit, speaking by the mouth of David, and the prophets subsequent to his day,

foretold a future period when the Church should appear in the greatness and glory to which God had destined her; his ultimate design in the erection of the Church was not communicated to the Old Testament saints, in the form of a command to extend her bounds and influence, so as to embrace the whole family of mankind. This was reserved until the time of the appearance of Christ in the world, and then was the command given by himself to his disciples to teach all nations, and to preach the gospel to every creature. Yet God, who sees and comprehends all things, from the beginning to the end, so constituted the Church, at its first erection, as to combine in it the principles of that moral power which he saw to be necessary for the accomplishment of his ultimate design. The Church was to be the instrument, in his hands, of resisting the assaults of wicked men and the hosts of hell, and eventually to vanquish them, and deliver the world from the thralldom of Satan and sin, by bringing it under the lawful and happy dominion of the Saviour.

Whenever power, either of a physical or of a moral nature, is placed in the hands of members, it is essential that there should be between them all that union of which they are capable. And God has most unequivocally declared his mind, that the individuals composing his Church should be held together by a strong, indissoluble bond of union.

1. *God has constituted the Church one and indivisible.*

It has but one head, and that is Christ. Col. 1. 18. Under the Old Testament dispensation, prior to the building of the temple, the manifestation of God's glory was in the cloud and in the tabernacle. There was but one cloud, and there was only one tabernacle, nor was there more than one ark of the covenant. And thus was the *unity* of the Church represented in that period. After the children of Israel had taken full possession of the land of promise, the unity of the Church was demonstrated by the erection of one temple; and to this one temple all the tribes of Israel were commanded to resort for the public worship of Jehovah.

If the unity of the Church constituted any portion of its excellence, beauty, or strength, under the first dispensations, it would be strange indeed if, under the New Testament, we had found a warrant for the severance of this union. In the history of our Lord and Saviour, we find no intimation from him that the unity of the Church was not to be preserved, nor any warrant for a division of the Church into distinct denominations, sects, or parties. His intercessory prayer for his Church, which consists of all believers, is, "that they *all may be one*," as the Father was in him and he in the Father, "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John xvii. 21. And in the next verse he says, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." These words do most evidently convey the idea of a most intimate union between the fo-

lowers of Christ, even as that which subsisted between him and his Father; and this union was to be visible to all mankind, that the world, seeing the union of his disciples, might believe that the Father had sent him. A union of heart merely, without an open, visible union, which the world would perceive, could have no influence in convincing the world of the Divine mission of Christ. Valuable and indispensable as a union of heart among believers is to the prosperity and beauty of the Church, it is the open, visible, and known union of the disciples that must conquer the prejudices and convince the understandings of the men of the world into the belief that Jesus Christ came from God. There is no force, no appropriateness, (be it spoken with reverence,) in the prayer, if a union of heart is all that is asked. No; this prayer of our Lord will not be answered, the avowed object for which he desired that his people might be one will not be accomplished, until Christians shall be one in affection, in counsel, in action, and in name.

Though the personal ministry of Christ was confined to the Jewish nation, he knew that under the dispensation of the Spirit, and through the preaching of the apostles, the Gentiles would also be called into the Church, which before that period embraced only the children of Israel. When the Gentiles should thus be brought to embrace the gospel, there was not to be a Gentile Church as distinguished from that of the Jews, and a line of division drawn between them; but they together

were to form one Church. In express reference to that event, the Saviour says, (John x. 16,) "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be *one fold*, and one shepherd." And after the gospel had, subsequent to the death of the Saviour, been propagated among the Gentiles, and many in the city of Ephesus had been received into the family of believers, St. Paul, in the second chapter of his Epistle, addressing the Ephesian converts, says, "But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who *hath made both one*, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain *one new man*, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

The doctrine of the unity of the Church, so plainly declared by the Saviour, was taught and earnestly inculcated by his apostles, under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost. St. Paul represents the unity of the Church under the figure of a human body, consisting, indeed, of many members, but between which there is an intimate union and necessary dependence, and between which a

schism cannot take place without endangering the destruction of the body itself. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." 1 Cor. xii. 12. "For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?" 1 Cor. xii. 14, 15. "Now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." 1 Cor. xii. 20, 21. "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." 1 Cor. xii. 25-27.

When the same apostle reproves the Corinthians for their contentions and divisions, he proves to them the inadmissibility and absurdity of such divisions, by putting the emphatic question, "Is Christ divided?" leaving it to themselves to draw the inference irresistibly flowing from it, that as Christ, the Head of the Church, is one and indivisible, so must the members of Christ, constituting the Church, be one among themselves, as well as one with him. 1 Cor. i. 10-13. Believers are declared by St. Paul to be members of Christ's body. Eph. v. 30. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." 1 Cor. xii. 27. "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." And they are

declared to be members one of another, constituting the body of Christ. Rom. xii. 4, 5. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." The saints are declared to be *the family* of God on earth, excluding the idea that there may be more than a single family constituting the Church of Christ. And in the first chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle beseeches them, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that they all speak the same thing, and *that there be no divisions* among them; but that they be *perfectly joined together* in the same mind and in the same judgment. 1 Cor. i. 10.

2. *The division of the Church into sects is a violation of its constitutional unity.*

Having proved the unity of the Church by the constitution of God himself, we proceed to show that its division into denominations and sects is a violation of this unity. A division into congregations cannot be understood to be a breach of the unity, when made for the sake of local convenience and in the spirit of love; but we speak of those divisions which result from disagreement and contention, and from the assumed impossibility or difficulty of remaining together in peace.

The unity of the Church was understood in this sense by Christ himself; and it was so understood by his apostles after his ascension into heaven, and after the plenary effusion of the Holy Spirit on the

day of Pentecost. That some difference would arise among true believers, on doctrinal and practical subjects, was known to the Saviour and his apostles; for they were well acquainted with the imperfections of the human understanding; but neither he nor they could have suffered the thought of a division of the Church, for such a cause, to have been harbored for a moment in the minds of Christians.

Every reader of the Acts of the Apostles knows that an unhappy disagreement arose between Paul, who was specially designated to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and some of the Jews in those parts where he ministered. When the news of this disagreement was carried to Jerusalem, some of the apostles who labored in that city and in the adjoining country of the Jews took sides against Paul. It is evident, from the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, taken in connection with the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, that this matter caused a strong excitement, easily accounted for from the nature of the subject, and the circumstances attending the case. But neither party took the ground that they might be considered as belonging, one to the Jewish and the other to the Gentile Church, and so each pursue his own course independently of the other. No; they knew they must be united; that they had no right to rend asunder the Church which God had joined together in the bond of inviolable union; and that by suffering the commencement of schisms, a train of evils would be

brought upon the Church of which they were unable to calculate the amount or duration. Paul, taking with him Barnabas and Titus, went to Jerusalem, and conferred with the other apostles: an amicable understanding was, after considerable difficulty, effected, and the threatened rupture happily avoided; the parties acting in the spirit of conciliation and forbearance. Peter afterward calls Paul his beloved brother.

Whenever dissensions arise in communities, a separation between the parties at variance is, to the corrupt mind of man, a natural suggestion. This separation may often be proper and harmless in those communities which are not designed to be of permanent duration. And the seeds of disunion being easily sown in the Church, there has been from the beginning, notwithstanding the evident design of God that the Church should endure to the end of the world, a disposition for one to say to the other, in case of any disagreement, "Stand by thyself." Had Paul yielded to this spirit, how plausible might have seemed to him the expediency of setting up himself as the head of the Gentile Church, leaving John, Peter, James, and the other apostles, to manage the concerns of the Jewish Church! He had been chosen and sent by Christ himself to preach the gospel to the heathen; and in the course of his ministry among them, he was constantly vexed by the Judaizing teachers, who sought to bring his converts under the yoke of the ritual law, while he was anxiously desirous that they should

enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. The establishment of a separate Gentile Church might have seemed to him the most effectual measure to destroy the influence of those teachers who so much annoyed him, as well as disturbed the peace of the converts under his ministry. And the difference between the Jews and the Gentiles in their national character, education, manners, habits, and other circumstances, might have presented an ample apology to human reason for a separation from the mother Church. But Paul knew that the Church was *one* by the constitution of Christ its Head, and that any division of it would have been utterly unlawful and inadmissible. He knew it would be presumptuous impiety in him to rebuild the partition wall which Jesus Christ, by his death, had broken down; and that he might not put asunder what his Divine Master had joined together.

The same apostle, as appears from his acts and his Epistles, was deeply impressed with the value of the Church's unity, and the calamities that would be consequent on its violation. His whole soul seems to have been burdened with the subject. With what earnestness does he caution the believers to whom he addresses his Epistles, against this principle of division! He tells the Corinthians it had been declared to him that there were contentions among them, for that every one of them said, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. He also tells them, "Ye are yet

carnal; for whereas there is among you envying and strife and *divisions*, are ye not carnal? For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" And again, "*I beseech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*" The apostle does not assume to heal their dissensions by interposing his authority to settle the question which party was right, or wherein the other was wrong; but he goes to the root of the evil, showing that the very fact of the disunion of Christians evinces the carnality, the unholy temper or habit of mind into which they had suffered themselves to be betrayed. The Corinthians doubtless believed, as the different denominations at this day believe in regard to themselves, that they had sufficient reason for separating from those who agreed not with them in their preferences; but the apostle does not deem it necessary for his argument to demand of them what was the difference between himself and Apollos and Cephas; nor does he instruct them that they were disputing about trifles or minor differences. He presses upon them the unity of the Church, and the sin and absurdity of a division of it into distinct denominations, arising from strife and disagreement. He does not admit one party to be less guilty than the other. The one that said, I belong to Paul's persuasion, and he who said, I believe

with Apollos, and the third who enlisted himself among the admirers of Cephas, and even those who, in the spirit and pride of sect and party, boasted of their superiority to the rest by claiming to belong to Christ—all are alike reproved, as either not understanding, or in their unholy excitements forgetting the relation in which they stood to each other as members of the same body of Christ, and “members one of another.” He asks with abruptness, and with great pertinency and emphasis, “*Is Christ divided?*” As if he had said, “If there may be two or more Churches, either all but one must be without a head, or the head must be divided into as many fragments as there are Churches, both of which are equally impossible.”

This vital principle was deeply engraven on the minds of the primitive Christians, no such thing being known as the separation of one body of believers from another on the ground of difference in matters of opinion or on points of practice. The Church continued one and undivided through the age of the apostles, and after the death of the last surviving apostle, even to the middle of the third century. In that period the gospel had been propagated and the Church extended throughout the inhabited world, and yet no such thing as a distinct denomination of Christians was known. The Church, says Milner, “was not broken into handfuls of distinct sects and parties, all glorying in having something peculiarly excellent, and prone to despise their neighbors.” See Milner’s Church

History, vol. i., pp. 275, 276. And why during that long period of more than two hundred years, subsequent to the death of Christ, did the Church remain unbroken? Was it because men gave but little attention to religion? Never has it so much engrossed the minds of men as during that age of the world. Was it because the gospel had not spread to a great distance, so as to come in contact with the minds of men of various habits, under different degrees of intellectual culture, and living in different parts of the earth? It had spread from Jerusalem to the ends of the world, and the Church embraced within her bosom Jews and Gentiles, philosophers, princes, and peasants of every clime, combining all the elements necessary to the production of schism. Was it because the men of that period were all infallibly taught and guided by the Holy Spirit in the maintenance of the same opinions and the pursuit of the same practices? Not so; scarcely had the preaching of the gospel commenced, before differences both of sentiment and practice occurred between Christians. This is evident from the Epistles of the Apostles Paul, James, Peter, John, and Jude. There were even damnable heresies broached in the Church, as well as minor differences, in the days of the apostles; and in the long period from their day to the middle of the third century, the world was inhabited by an intellectual population, whom it is impossible to believe were unanimous in their religious opinions and practices. What then was it that kept Christians together in one

Church? It was the strength of the principle which they believed—which they *knew* to be according to the constitution of God—that the Church is one, and any division of it wholly inadmissible; and their faithful adherence to the directions of the Scriptures, that heretics must be cast out of the Church, and that the principle of forbearance must be applied to differences which are not of fundamental importance. Accordingly, we find that all who were believed to be the real disciples of Christ, having been born of his Spirit, were received into the Church, and heretics were rejected; and this line of distinction was found sufficiently precise. Milner's Church History, vol. i., p. 154.

The adherence to these sound scriptural principles became, however, in process of time, weakened, as the bond of charity which held the body of believers together was relaxed. The thing so much dreaded, and so long resisted, at last happened. The Church became divided. Ichabod was written upon its banner: its glory had truly departed. The constitution of the Church was violated, and, as might have been expected, one disaster after another befell the Church until the man of sin obtained the ascendancy, and brought the dark ages upon the world. Long, very long was the earth enveloped in the gloom of night, even until the Reformation from Popery ushered in the light of morning. That morning was bright. The reformed Church remained one for many years, growing with the increase of God. Although minor differences arose,

they were not permitted to rend her asunder. But after the lapse of years, the spirit of controversy was suffered to prevail among the successors of the reformers, and, in the heat of their disputations, they separated into different sects, according to their varying creeds. The parties, however, were very reluctant to commence the business of separation. Their consciences were ill at ease, knowing as they did the unscriptural character of any division of the Church of Christ. The reformers themselves, when they withdrew from the Church of Rome, did not do it on the ground that it is lawful for Christians to separate from each other. On the contrary, the only justification they avowed for leaving that Church was, that she was not the Church of Christ. They were agreed that the Church is one, and that any division of that Church is a breach of its unity.

Having shown in what sense the unity of the Church was understood by the apostles, by the primitive Christians of the first three centuries, and by the reformers in the sixteenth century, we proceed to show that the constitution of the Church admits of no other exposition. This constitution we have seen is coeval with the Church itself; and in the intercessory prayer of the Saviour it is recognized as applicable to the Christian Church, embracing all, both Jews and Gentiles, who then believed or who should thereafter believe in his name; and for them he prays that they all may be one, even as he and the Father were one. That it is the duty of believers to be united in the sense

here expressed will not be denied. The inquiry, therefore, is, What is the nature of that union which Christ prays may subsist among his disciples? It is plain that he cannot be understood to refer to that ineffable union which subsists between himself and the Father, as two of the persons in the Trinity, because of this union his creatures are not capable; but he must be understood as speaking of a union which may be predicated of mankind, and as praying for a union among his people in all those respects in which men can be bound together in the same sense that he and the Father are united. Men are capable of a union in feeling, in counsel, in action, and in name; and if Jesus and his Father are in these respects one, his disciples, if there be any meaning in words, are bound to be also one in the same sense; for the Saviour says in the twenty-second verse, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, *even as we are one.*" There cannot, then, be a doubt that he intended to pray for and inculcate upon his disciples a union of the same kind and nature in all respects as that which subsists between him and his Father, with the single exception above mentioned, arising from the subject-matter.

In what sense, then, were the Saviour and his Father one? Independently of their mysterious union above alluded to, they were one in feeling, in counsel, in action, and in name. They are united together in the feeling of love one to another. So must his children be. But so they cannot be when

divided into distinct denominations; for not only do such divisions spring from the want of that degree of mutual love and forbearance necessary to hold them together in the bond of union, but they tend to weaken and destroy what of the principle of love may be remaining, and produce the contrary affections of opposition or indifference, alienation of heart and hatred.

Jesus Christ and his Father are *one in counsel*, there being no discord or contrariety in their plans. So it ought to be with those who believe in the Saviour. They should speak the same thing, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 1 Cor. i. 10. But this cannot be predicated of believers belonging to opposing sects. Their counsels and their plans are not in unison, and the very reason why they have separated is, that they could not hold counsel together because of their various views and feelings.

The Father and his beloved Son are *one in action*. The works that Jesus seeth the Father do, these he doeth also. John v. 19. They always act in concert. So it ought to be with believers: they should stand fast in one spirit and in one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. Phil. ii. 2. But this cannot be asserted of Christians of different persuasions. They have arrayed themselves under different banners, manifesting that they are not willing to act together; and, in point of fact, each acts independently of the other. They do not strive *together* for the faith of the gospel. The faith

which is propagated by the one is denied and opposed by the other. What one builds, another destroys, for the plain reason that what promotes the prosperity of one, often tends to the injury and even destruction of the other.

Our Saviour and his Father are *one in name*. There is, indeed, a variety of names given to them in the Scriptures, expressive of the several perfections of their character, office, or appropriate work, not indicating opposition or contrariety, but the most perfect harmony. So it should be with the members of Christ's Church. One name ought to suffice for them all; and if more than one name be applied to them, these names should convey to the mind a harmonious and not a discordant sound, as that of believers, Christians, disciples, saints, children of God, the faithful, the just, and the like; all of which are in strict accordance with the characters and relation to Christ which they ought to exhibit. But how is it in point of fact? The very names by which Christians of different denominations are known, which they themselves have assumed, and of which all sectarians are proud, are names of distinction, to show the line of division between one and the other. As the Corinthians were some of the party of Paul, some of Apollos, and some of Cephas, so Christians now call themselves Calvinists, Lutherans, Arminians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, all indicating the absence instead of subsistence of union between them. Should the apostle

Paul now arise from the dead, and, under a commission from his Divine Master, visit the Churches of Christendom, what surprise would he not manifest at finding these discordant names among the professed disciples of his Lord! Would he not demand of us, as he did of the Corinthians in regard to their divisions, Who is Calvin, other than a minister of Christ, that you call yourselves after his name, as though he were your master? What is Luther more than any servant of the Lord, that you should take his name upon you? And who were Arminius and Wesley? Were they more than servants of the Lord, as you all ought to be? Are each of these men entitled to the same honor with Christ himself, that God's own people should be named after them, even as the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch, to denote their subjection to him? Is Christ divided? And how many Christs have ye? Into how many fractions have ye divided your blessed Saviour? and into how many more will you yet divide him before your divisions shall have an end? Know ye not that the Church constitutes but one body, of which Christ himself is the Head, and of which you are all members? Have ye not read in the Scriptures that there must be no divisions among you?

Were there room for any remaining doubt whether the division into sects is a violation of its constitutional unity, we might adduce further evidence from a more particular consideration of the figures of

speech employed by the Saviour and his apostles to express the unity of the Church.

When our Lord represents himself as *the vine*, he represents his disciples as *the branches*. Hereby is expressed not only an intimate union between himself as the vine and his disciples as the branches, but also an intimate and inseparable union between the branches themselves. While the branches remain attached to the vine, they draw their nourishment from it, and each branch communicates of its support to all the rest; but by detaching one of the branches, its union with the vine and the other branches is destroyed, and its nourishment from the parent stock and the benefit it receives from the other branches must cease. How absurd would be the idea that this detached branch should still claim to derive its nourishment from the parent stock, and to be yet united to the other branches! Not less absurd is the idea that a portion of the Church, after it is detached from the rest by its formation into a distinct sect, should yet claim to be united to those from whom they are torn away.

Another figure employed to represent the unity of the Church, as we have already had occasion to remark, is that of the human body composed of all its various members. There is an intimate union between all the parts of the body: the severance of one of the members is the destruction of that member, and mutilates the body. Between all the members, too, there is a mutual dependence; one cannot

say to the other, I have no need of thee ; and when one suffers, the others also suffer with it, as is beautifully and strongly illustrated in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, already referred to. It would be most absurd for the foot or any other member to insist on a severance from the body, because of a lack of harmony between it and the other members ; and after its severance to claim that it still maintains its former union with the body. Equally absurd is it for any one or any number of believers to separate themselves from the Church because of the want of union in feeling, mind, opinion, counsel, or action between them and the other members of the Church ; and alike absurd is it that those who are thus separated should claim that they are, notwithstanding, still maintaining their union with those from whom they have been severed.

Again, believers are called the *family* of God on earth. A well-ordered family will be harmonious in their feelings, views, plans, and actions. So long as it is the design of the institution that a human family shall remain together, they will so remain, promoting each other's comfort and happiness, and qualifying the different members of it for the parts they are expected to act in life, after their retirement at the proper time from the family circle. They do not separate for the reason that they cannot live together in peace and love. Whenever a separation for this cause actually takes place, the design of the institution of families is subverted, the family loses its character, and is disgraced even in

the eyes of the world. It was the design of God, clearly expressed in the Scriptures, that the Church should always be one; that all Christians in every place should worship, pray, render thanksgiving and praise *together*, except only where numbers and distance of place prevent; that they should counsel and act together, for the salvation of sinners, for promoting the welfare of the whole family of believers, and qualifying each member for a place which, after their removal from the family of the saints below, they hope to occupy in the family of God in heaven. There ought not to be a breaking up of the family of God's Church for the reason that its members cannot harmonize together; and whenever such an event does in point of fact occur, the family is disgraced in the eye of God, forasmuch as they have subverted the constitution which he has himself ordained for his Church.

Another expressive figure employed by the Holy Spirit in speaking of the Church, is that of a *sheep-fold*. Mark the expression, a *sheep-fold*. Not an enclosure for dogs, wolves, or tigers, between whom it is necessary to build walls of great strength and height, to keep them from biting, tearing, and destroying one another; but of harmless, peaceable sheep, that may safely be kept together in flocks, be they never so large, and which are divided into several folds, only for the purpose of supplying to them with more facility their food, and their other necessities and conveniences. And must it be confessed that the sheep of Christ cannot live together

in peace? Do they embody so much of the nature of the ferocious brute, as that the only means of preventing one from destroying another is to keep them at a safe distance? Even thieves and robbers can live in bands of brotherhood in the same den, with nothing but the tie of interest and common danger to keep them together. But the children of Christ's kingdom cannot live in a state of union, although they are exposed to hosts of common enemies, and all have the same everlasting interests, and ought to be bound in the same bond of love, and all the holy ties of religion. What a libel on the character of Christianity! What a perverted exhibition of its nature and influence!

THE BOND OF UNION.

We have thus seen that God tolerates no divisions in his Church, having constituted it one and indivisible. He well knew, at the same time, that the Church was composed, and would be composed, of fallible men, who needed every guard and help to keep them in the bond of unity, and preserve them from schism. He has, therefore, given abundant directions in his holy word to provide against this danger, and which, had they been obeyed, in the measure in which men have ability to obey them, would have preserved the unity of the Church.

The *great principle* inculcated in the Scriptures for maintaining the unity of the Church, is *love*.

God himself is love. The union between the believer and his Lord is a union of love and confi-

dence; and Christians are bound to live in love to each other, in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. The last command of the Saviour to his disciples was that they should love one another. The Apostle John declares the love of the brethren to be the great test of Christian character, and argues that it is wholly vain for a man to pretend that he loves God, if he does not evince love for his brother. The exercise of love required among the members of God's family is not merely an abstinence from hatred and hostility, but the exercise of affection, the feeling and manifestation of kindness, the desire of maintaining intercourse with each other; nay, of being together, counselling and acting together, honoring their Master and Head together, suffering together, rejoicing together, rendering thanksgiving together, worshipping and praying together, and holding communion together at the Lord's table.

The truth of all this will not be denied; but how, it will be asked, is this principle of love to be maintained, while there is so much in the infirmities, not to say vicious propensities of men, to impair and expel it?

We answer that the great secret for the preservation of love in the Church, and in every other community, is *forbearance*. Where this duty is not religiously observed, love cannot long subsist among sinful mortals; but where the duty is recognized, appreciated, and performed, love and unity will be maintained until the offending party shall wholly

forfeit his character as a member of the community, and not only authorize but demand an expulsion.

The Scripture abounds in its requisitions of this duty of forbearance. The Lord Jesus Christ inculcates it, both by precept and example. He inculcates it *by precept* in commanding his disciples to practice the mutual forgiveness of injuries, not only once, but an indefinite number of times; by diverting the attention of his followers more to the beam in their own eye than to the mote in the eye of their brother; by cautioning against the exercise of a rash and uncharitable judgment of others; by insisting on the duty of self-denial; and, in short, by the whole scope of his precepts and doctrines relating to the intercourse of his disciples with each other. Our blessed Lord *practiced* this duty of forbearance personally in his own family of disciples. None can fail to admire his patience with his disciples, in the exhibition of their pride and ambition; with their unreasonable request that he would advance them to the best stations in the temporal kingdom they expected he was about to set up; with their unbelief, so unaccountable to us, of his approaching death and resurrection, although plainly foretold by the prophets and expressly declared by himself, and with their total ignorance of even the meaning of the resurrection from the dead. How remarkable was his forbearance with their desertion of him in the hour of his extreme distress; with the denial of Peter; with the avarice of Judas, until

his apostasy was manifest! And after all his experience of their unteachableness and imperfections, and with the knowledge of their approaching defection, how patiently and affectionately does he address them in the thirteenth and subsequent chapters of John's Gospel, as though there had been no other concern in his bosom than to furnish them with matter of consolation during the short period between his apprehension and his resurrection! All the time of his converse with the disciples he indeed faithfully reproved them for their faults, and instructed them as they were able to bear it; but he cherished them as members of his family, so long as they gave evidence of their love to God, and attachment to his cause.

Nor is there a lack of harmony on this topic between the Saviour and his apostles. In the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul exhorts the saints and the faithful in all lowliness and meekness and long-suffering to forbear one another in love. The Colossian Christians he commends to "put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ also forgave you." Col. iii. 12, 13.

The duty of forbearance is, in the Scriptures, expressly enjoined in matters of *opinion* as well as matters of practice. In the fourteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul teaches as follows: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not

to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth; *for God hath received him*. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. For why dost thou judge thy brother, or why hast thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand at the judgment-seat of Christ."

Much as these texts are quoted and perverted by latitudinarians, they have notwithstanding a meaning, and may not be stricken from the Bible. The application of them to our present point is very striking, when we consider that there were among the Christians at Rome differences of opinion as to what food might or might not be lawfully eaten, and also as to the observance of particular days. It is easy to perceive that these differences of opinion would introduce different practices in different congregations and in different families, as well as in different individuals of the same congregation and of the same family. What was eaten by the one, another condemned as unlawful; and he who refused to observe a particular day was deemed disobedient to God's law by him who did observe it. With the spirit of contention, these variances of

judgment were calculated to break in upon brotherly love, and banish peace from every Church and every family; being not merely disagreements on theoretical points of doctrine, but on matters which must directly influence the practice of the parties more or less every day. Should differences of this character arise among Christians at the present time, would they forbear with each other? No; they would separate into distinct sects almost as soon as the difference should be discovered. Why? Because we have so long been accustomed to the false doctrine of the lawfulness of divisions in the Church, that we would overlook or disregard the enjoined duty of forbearance. But with the spirit of meekness, Christian love, and forbearance, such differences may, in the opinion of the apostle, (and he wrote by inspiration of God,) be endured, and, notwithstanding such differences, families may remain together, and the Church undivided. These points of controversy are not, indeed, the same with those which now divide the Church into sects. Our divisions are upon rituals, upon government, and what are called questions of theology. But the law of forbearance extends to all matters of difference between Christians. No line of distinction is drawn in the Scriptures, nor does reason require or admit that there should be any. The ground of the duty, as stated by the apostle, is that no man shall assume to be master of another. If I may not be the lord of your *actions*, by what process of reasoning can it be shown that I may lord it over your *understanding*?

If the Church must forbear with the wrong conduct or practice of a member, conscientiously believed by him to be in accordance with the Scriptures, why should she not bear with the wrong opinion of a member which he conscientiously judges to be drawn from the Bible?

We speak of the duty of forbearance, as it is to be exercised towards Christians, members of the Church. Those who err may and ought to be instructed, admonished, exhorted, reproved, or warned, according to the directions abundantly given in the Holy Scriptures; but so long as they, in the judgment of charity, may be deemed Christians, there is no warrant to expel them from the Church, unless it may be in those cases of error which strike at its foundations. It is true that every error, whether of opinion or practice, may have a tendency more or less direct or remote to weaken the Church, and, if countenanced, may in the end subvert it. Yet there is a wide difference between one error and another, as is evident from the Scriptures and the dictates of reason. Every error is not alike injurious. There is none that may be countenanced; there are many that must be tolerated, or the principles of forbearance must be abandoned. There are errors which are in their character fundamental, or essential, and there are those of minor importance. The dividing line between them it may in some instances not be very easy to trace with accuracy; yet such a line of distinction actually does exist, and was doubtless more clearly seen in the

primitive ages, when the Church remained entire, than it now is; and it will again be as clearly discerned, when the Spirit of unity shall have taken up his abode in the Church, and Christians shall have returned to the practice of love and forbearance. Even now, under the dominion of sect, there are many who are so far delivered from its power, that they would have little difficulty in practice to draw the line between errors that are essential and those which are not essential; and the facility of discovering in the Scriptures the mind of the Spirit on this subject, will increase, as the spirit of division shall die away.

CHAPTER XIV.

APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS OF EVERY DENOMINATION.

THE following appeal to Christians of all denominations contains the substance of Mr. Van Dyck's argument on Christian Union :

CHRISTIAN brethren, have we placed before you the picture of a gloomy fancy, or have we exhibited to you a sober view of the reality? Do you feel with us for the loss sustained by the individual Christian, the Church, and the world, by means of the divisions in the family of the Saviour? Are you willing to mourn with us over the breaches of the Church, her desolations, disgraced condition, her low estate, and imminent danger? Let us then with united and humbled hearts adopt the language of the Psalmist: "O God, thou hast cast us off; thou hast scattered us; thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again. Thou hast made the earth to tremble, thou hast broken it; heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh." Let us, with Asa and Josiah, with Hezekiah, Daniel, and Ezra, confess our iniquities and the iniquities of our fathers, which have provoked the Lord to anger, and let us

supplicate a return of his mercy and his loving-kindness, that he may restore the glory of his Church, and smile upon his people who are called after his own name.

Let us not only humble ourselves before our offended God, but exert ourselves to undo what we and our fathers have done, employing our faculties, our privileges, and opportunities to heal the divisions in the Church, and restore to her the peace, love, and unity which she enjoyed in the primitive ages of Christianity; yea, that the Lord may bestow upon her blessings still more abundant, even such as he has promised in his holy word to bestow upon her in the latter days.

We ought assuredly to yield to the motives presented in the Bible to us as friends of Christ and professors of his religion. Do we desire to possess evidence of our adoption into the family of God? Let us then open our hearts to the exercise of brotherly love. Hereby do we know that we have passed from death unto life, if we love the brethren. 1 John iii. 14. Let us love, and manifest our love by treating as friends the brethren: not only those of our own name and party, but all who belong to Christ. Whosoever doeth the will of God is his brother, sister, and mother; and if they are so nearly and dearly related to him, we ought to feel that they are in like manner related to ourselves.

Or do you desire the consolations peculiar to the obedient disciples of Christ? "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of

love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Phil. ii. 1, 2. Are you anxious to become established in the faith and practice of the gospel? Then "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." Phil. i. 27. Do you long to exercise and exhibit the same mind that was also in our Lord and Saviour, knowing that he who has not the Spirit of Christ is none of his? Then let your heart's desire and prayer be like unto his, that his disciples may all be one, as he and the Father are one. Do you wish to manifest your love to the Divine Redeemer? Then keep his commandments, and especially the new commandment he gave his disciples: "That ye love one another, as I have loved you." John xiii. 34.

Do you wish, Christian brethren, to convince a gainsaying and unbelieving world of the reality of the Christian religion by your exhibition of its character and influence? Then labor to promote love among the brethren; for "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John xiii. 35.

Is it our desire that the gospel may exert its power upon the lives of its professors, and upon the whole world now lying in wickedness and ruin? Why do we not see this desire fulfilled even now? Does not our blessed Saviour himself instruct us that Christianity is diffusive in its nature, like unto leaven? And have we not abundant means to pro-

pagate the gospel among those who have never heard its joyful sound, and to enforce its claims upon those who inhabit Christian climes? We have a thousand Bibles at our command where the primitive Christians had one; and we have millions of tracts, newspapers, and other productions of the press, while the apostles had none of these to minister the bread of life to the believer, and arouse the conscience of the unbeliever. All these we have in addition to the living preacher, and these we can send where he cannot be spared to go. We have, moreover, in the history of the Church, in the history of the Jews, and of the world, and in the fulfilment of prophecy, subsequent to the days of the apostles, evidence as convincing perhaps as the miracles which were wrought and the gift of tongues which was exercised in their day. The Holy Spirit has the same power over the hearts of men to convince, persuade, and subdue, as he had in the days of Paul, and Peter, and John. Why, then, O why do not Christians possess and exhibit religion in the life and power which they did then? and why do not the heathen receive the gospel as they did in the primitive ages? This inquiry, we are happy to observe, has become one of intense interest. Wherefore is so little effected, while the means employed are so ample, and apparently adapted to the end sought to be accomplished? Some attribute it to the weakness of our faith, and others to a lack of the spirit of prayer, or of zeal, or of self-denial in the Christians of modern times. And, no doubt,

in these things we are greatly deficient; yet it is difficult to ascertain how much more of these virtues and graces were exercised in the days of the apostles than at the present time. While we are disposed to admit that we come behind them in perhaps all the preceding particulars, *do we not fall short chiefly in this, that we are not, as they were, of one heart and one soul?* Acts iv. 32. If the husband and wife who live not as being heirs together of the grace of life, have thereby their prayers hindered, (1 Pet. iii. 7,) who can tell whether the prayers and efforts of believers for the prosperity of Zion are not hindered by their unholy divisions? We verily fear that the Holy Spirit is grieved by our breaches of the peace and unity of the brotherhood, so that he is unwilling to impart to his Church more than a scanty measure of his influence. Can the spirit of peace and love delight to dwell and exert the fulness of his influence in the midst of the controversies, strife, alienation of heart, envy, jealousy, pride, and vainglory of sects? Who knows whether God is not waiting for his children to restore peace and brotherly love among themselves, and to the Church its primitive unity, before it will please him to put forth the fulness of his power upon the hearts of men in the evangelized and pagan world? The rebuke which a holy God is certainly ministering to his people may be continued until the occasion of it shall be removed. How can we act in the right spirit or pray in the right mind while we remain in our present state of unlawful division? A

husband and wife whose affections are alienated from each other cannot send up their united prayers to God; and their individual prayers will be hindered; much less can they be supposed to pray in the unity of the spirit when living in a state of actual separation, induced by their disagreement. If they do not restrain prayer altogether, the duty cannot be performed in a proper frame of mind, for they cannot approach the mercy-seat without a consciousness of living in a state which is offensive to God. So also the Christian, who is conscious of his duty, by God's requirement, to live in love and unity with all his brethren, "and that there may be no divisions among them," cannot, while living in a state of unlawful separation, come to the throne of grace with that confidence which is necessary to the performance of acceptable prayer. "If our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God." 1 John iii. 21. But whose heart does not condemn him for his participation in the sin of division in the Church of Christ? Permit us to assure you that "God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." 1 John iii. 20. Let us put away this sin, and then may we look for a more vigorous faith—a faith that will, with a clear conscience, lay hold on the perfections and promises of God; and then may we hope for the prevalence of fervent, earnest, humble, and persevering prayer; and then will the united supplications of God's people ascend to his throne; and then may we expect to behold the manifestation of more scriptural

zeal and self-denial; and then, the great hindrance to the efforts and prayers of the Lord's servants being removed, we may expect the influence of his Spirit to descend upon the Church as rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth.

In urging upon you, Christian brethren, to unite your hearts and your energies to restore the original unity of the Church, permit us to appeal to your love for the glory of the Saviour's name. As the apostle deprecated the formation of a party among the Corinthians, even to the exaltation of his own name, preferring infinitely that all the glory should be ascribed to Christ, let us not permit any name to stand in competition with his, nor to detract in the least degree from the honor due to him. Yea, let us not suffer any name to be great, but that of Christ, and "*let every name be lost in his.*" Remember, we pray you, how Jesus connects his glory with the unity of his disciples; for in praying to the Father for them, he says, "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." John xvii. 22.

We appeal to your love for the Church of Christ, which he hath purchased with his own blood, and to your anxious care for the prosperity of that Church, that she may grow with the increase of God, that she may answer the great objects for which she has been constituted, and that she may be edified in every part. By your regard for these, we would urge you to pray and labor to restore unity and

harmony to the members of that spiritual body of which Christ is the head, "from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. iv. 16. By the most diligent, assiduous cultivation of the spirit of brotherly affection and unity, let us roll away the reproach which the Church is suffering through the divisions of her children; and prove the falsity of the libels which have been published against the religion of the gospel, by showing that Christians *can live together* in harmony and love.

Suffer us to make our appeal to you, as lovers of the truth of God, which is too precious to be longer sacrificed on the altar of sect and party. Until the watchmen shall see eye to eye, the Church will be troubled and deformed with errors; and as long as each sect adheres to its standard of doctrine, so long will those errors be perpetuated. Let us then unite our most earnest endeavors and our prayers to bring all Christians back to the only unerring standard of truth, the inspired writings of the Old and New Testaments, and to the rightful and only efficient and infallible teacher, the Holy Spirit. Let no writings of men be suffered to receive the honor which is due only to the word of God, and no teacher to bear any comparison with the Spirit of truth. Then "shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of

darkness." "They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine." Let the blinded partisan who believes his Church to be the only depository of the truth, and the members of his Church the exclusive friends of the truth, be made to see that the cause of truth will be best advanced during the universal prevalence of the gospel, when all party distinctions will be abolished. And let us not forget to cherish those truths which are connected with the peace of the Church: "Love the truth and peace." Zech. viii. 19. "Let us follow after the things which make for peace." In declaring his purpose to restore his favor to the people of Jerusalem, God promises, Jer. xxxiii. 6, that he "will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth."

May we not indeed confidently appeal to you, as lovers of the peace of Jerusalem? Must the sword devour for ever? When shall it have an end? How dear is the peace of the Church to the heart of the Saviour! In his last discourse with his disciples preceding his death, when his bowels were moved with tender emotion, he tells them, John xiv. 27, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you." And after he had risen from the dead, the disciples being assembled at evening, and the doors of the house being shut, he came and stood in the midst of them, and said, "Peace be unto you. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be

unto you." "And after eight days, his disciples were within, and Thomas was with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." John xx. 19-21, 26. When shall the desires of the Saviour be accomplished in a conformity of the feelings and intercourse of his disciples to his own benevolent heart? Even the children of the world shall, in the days to come, be hushed into peace, for "they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid." Micah iv. 3, 4. It cannot be that the followers of the Prince of Peace shall alone hearken to the voice of the grand seducer inciting to contention and division, when the nations of the earth shall hearken to the voice of reason and of God, so that the wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the child shall play on the hole of the asp. There is already formed and in operation a "*Peace Society*," whose efforts, we hope, God will bless, by moving the nations of the earth for ever to sheathe the sword of war. Already do we count upon the advantages which will result to the Church of Christ by the removal of the obstacles which war presents to the progress of Christianity. But how do we know, Christian brethren, whether the peace of civil communities and of nations is not suspended on the restoration of peace in the Church of Christ? Per-

haps the Lord may turn a deaf ear to the supplications of his people, to moderate the heat of political parties in this country, until they shall have banished the spirit of party from the Church. Perhaps God will not incline the nations of the world to put up the devouring sword, while his children are continuing strife and divisions between one another. We have at least no right to assume that he will invert the order of things which he has himself established, by making the world the salt of the Church, instead of leaving the Church to be the salt of the earth; or, in other words, that he will give peace and unity to civil communities and to the nations of the earth, while the Church remains the only theatre of war and division. The Saviour exhorts his disciples, Mark ix. 50, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." Let us not, dear brethren, undervalue the blessings of peace in the Church, which is so very dear to our Saviour. His gospel is called the "gospel of *peace*." At his birth, the angels announced to the shepherds, "Peace on earth." The blessing of peace is mentioned in the Bible perhaps more frequently than any other. Indeed, the word is often used to embrace within its meaning every other blessing, as though none were of any value in comparison with it; and as though God designed to teach us that there can be no compensation for the loss of peace; and that whatever may be sacrificed for the sake of peace, the supposed loss will oftentimes prove to be gain.

We address ourselves to the advocates and apologists of sect, and beseech them to examine well the ground on which they stand, and bring all their opinions to the test of the only standard of religious truth, the Holy Scriptures. We entreat them to remember how difficult it has always been to keep the Church from departing from the writings of inspiration, and how prone men have always been to receive in their stead the commandments, the traditions, and the fallacious reasonings of men. We pray you to reflect on the many and direful evils, the unlawful and unconstitutional character of divisions in the Church, and on the beauty, the strength, and excellence of unity. Such evils can you entail, such blessings will you sacrifice on the altar of party strife? Consider, we implore you, the tremendous guilt connected with the maintenance of disunion in the household of Christ, the consequent disgrace of the Church, and the incalculable loss of precious souls.

We address ourselves also to all who are engaged in religious controversy, although they may not be the advocates or apologists of sect; and we beg of them to weigh well the tendency of their labors, especially at this crisis in the affairs of the Church. Think, Christian brethren, whether our Divine Master has not a more profitable service for you to perform than to keep up contentions which tend to widen and multiply, or at least continue, the breaches already existing in the Church. The friends of Christ have now no time to spare for these purposes,

when the providence of God calls for thousands of laborers to be otherwise employed. There is little danger that Christians will forget or fail to appreciate the truths of God's word while they shall be, like their Saviour, diligently employed in doing good, and obeying his command to evangelize the world. Now, if ever, we should be following after the things which make for peace, and let the din of controversy cease to distract the Christian community, while the foes of the Church are thickening upon her. Where is the profit or propriety of discussing every subtile difficulty in the speculative theology of the Church, while the Church itself, as a house divided against itself, is in imminent danger of being brought to desolation?

We would appeal to all the friends of the reünion of the Church, and exhort them to "be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, nor be ye dismayed, for the Lord our God (as we verily believe) is with you." He has established the Church originally upon the basis of unity, and she shall again be one, and your prayers and exertions for healing its divisions will be pleasing to him, and in due time you will reap, if you faint not; for he will command his blessing upon you, and prosper your efforts. He can melt away every obstacle that now presents itself against the holy cause which you have espoused, and sooner than you now dare to hope. Multitudes who are at present blinded by the influence of sect will come up to the help of the Lord—to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

And even if you should fail, brethren, what can be the loss? Consider the means we propose to be pursued for restoring the unity of the Church, and say whether these will leave the Church in a worse condition than she now is in. Who can doubt that she will be greatly benefited, when by them the religion of Christ will be raised to a higher standard, as well as be more widely diffused through the world? You and your children will participate in the general blessing. At all events, the reward of the peacemaker will be yours, for Christ himself has declared, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

We appeal to the ministers of the gospel of Christ, for to you belongs the principal agency in this work of the Lord. You are the watchmen on the walls of Zion, appointed to make strict observation of the position of the enemy, and of every movement he makes in his assaults upon your Master's kingdom; and to you it belongs, as officers under the Captain of salvation, so to marshal and lead on his forces as to insure the conquest he designs to make of the world, now under the usurped dominion of Satan. To you it pertains to collect the scattered bands of Christ, to persuade them to dismiss the spirit of discord, and to infuse into them the spirit of love and unity. Of all men, you are to exert the mightiest influence. By all means, let there be no divisions among *you*.

We make our appeal to the laymen of our Churches, and especially those of the legal profes-

sion. You are beginning to assume a labor and exert an influence in matters of religion which a few years ago was almost wholly confided to and borne by the clergy. We count much and place great reliance on your aid in this holy enterprise. You are certainly free from many of the entanglements of sect in which the ministers of the gospel are involved. You are not bigots, and it is with you to sustain and encourage such of the clergy as would fain break the iron chain which holds them. As you are capable of understanding the subjects discussed in this work, we earnestly solicit your attention, and the exercise of your deliberate judgment upon them; and if you come to the same conclusions with ourselves as to the evils, the unlawful and unconstitutional character of sectarian divisions, and the duty of Christians to restore the original unity of the Church, we may assure ourselves of your cordial coöperation.

We would address ourselves also to the conductors of religious newspapers and other periodicals. You are doubtless conscious of your power in the direction of public sentiment; and we are aware that if you frown upon our enterprise, the difficulty of accomplishing it will be greatly increased. Should you smile upon it, we would count on you as our most powerful auxiliaries. As you acknowledge your obligation to improve the talents committed, in the providence of God, to your care, and especially your duty to advance the best interests of the Church—not of a sect or party, but of the Church

of Christ—we may reasonably expect that you will not condemn our scheme without examination, nor withhold your countenance, if you deem us entitled to it, from the merits of our cause.

To our young men just commencing or about to commence the service of Christ, in the ministry or otherwise, we would speak a word of entreaty. See that you build not up the walls of partition. You are desirous of doing something for your Saviour, for your fellow-Christians, and for sinners, upon which you may look back with pleasure when your race shall have been run, as well as during all the stages of your course. While you resolve to be content with any place which God may assign for the performance of your labors in his vineyard, you will not shrink from occupying a position which may require arduous toil and persevering watchfulness and severe self-denial to sustain. Nor would you refuse an employment which bids fair to bring much honor to the Lord you desire to serve, and much of everlasting benefit to immortal souls. Here, then, is presented to you an enterprise worthy the ambition (if that word may be used in an innocent sense) of a Christian soldier—of a youthful Christian soldier—whose bosom beats with ardor to hasten the victory which Christ hath purchased with his blood: an enterprise which, when accomplished, will constitute the “bond of perfectness,” to give unity, beauty, and strength to the whole system of means ordained of God to bring back to their allegiance a revolted, ruined world.

We appeal to Christians of every denomination. We offer you the right hand of fellowship, as belonging to the same family of Christ, exposed to the same dangers, dependent upon the same Protector, supported by the same hopes, sustained by the same means of grace, having in view the same end, and hoping to inhabit the same heaven. We long to have the wall of separation between us not lowered merely, but razed to the ground, so that there may be no division between us, and that we may be one, even as Jesus and the Father are one, one in affection, in counsel, in action, and in name. Brethren, we have no separate interests; your Church is ours, and our Church is yours. All things are yours, and all things are ours. We and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. Wherefore should we any longer contend? Wherefore should we any more live apart? Has not God put us together, as branches of the same vine, as sheep of the same fold, brethren of the same household, and members of the same body? Why then should we suffer men to keep us asunder? On unimportant points we may differ, but why should we contend?

We appeal to the *Christians of America*. To you much is given, and of you much is required. You are unfettered by religious establishments, and to you the task of abolishing sects, and reuniting the Church, will be comparatively easy. The Church, in this country, is not connected with the State; of course the State will not impede her in any scheme of reformation she may pursue, nor will she disturb

the State by any changes which she may undergo. We are privileged beyond the rest of the world, in the enjoyment of liberty of conscience, and the pure ministry of the gospel. Let us improve our advantages and facilities.

We close with the following extract from a sermon published in the *National Preacher* of February, 1834: "To American Christians, it is believed, is assigned, in the purposes of Heaven, much of the honor of that moral renovation of the human family which is ere long to be experienced. A little less than a century since, the immortal Edwards employed his mighty mind in attempting to show the probability that the millennium will commence in this country. Whether or not this opinion is well founded, there can be no doubt that Christians in America may have a share in the high honor of diffusing the blessings of that happy period throughout the globe. It is a momentous question, one which ought to come home to every heart that feels the love of God, whether their share in this honor shall be great or small. Could I raise my feeble voice to a note which might be heard through the breadth of the land, I would urge on every saint that love to all the household of faith, by which the Saviour has taught that the disciples shall be known. I would say to him, Brother, as you love the Saviour, as you desire to see his glories spread around the world, and the souls of men redeemed from hell, take heed that whenever you meet an individual bearing his image, by what

name soever he may be called, you embrace him in the arms of Christian affection, and be ready to co-operate with him in every good work. Too long has the Church crippled her own energies and retarded her growth by mutual dissension and the spirit of party. As the brightness of a more glorious day begins to dawn upon her, O let this spirit cease, and its place be occupied by that love which seeketh not her own."

CHAPTER XV.

GEMS OF THOUGHT—ELEGANT EXTRACTS FROM
DISTINGUISHED MEN.

REV. THEOD. F. WYCKOFF, OF WEST TROY, NEW YORK.

“That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.”—JOHN xvii. 21.

FEW words in human, perhaps few in angelic language, are more amazing and joyful than these of our Saviour. Christ here implores of the Father for the whole body of believers, throughout all time, a union with their Divine Lord, and through him with each other, so strange, so gracious, and so dear, that the noblest mortal conceptions utterly fail to attain its glorious heights or to fathom its profound depths. “The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” There are earthly relations very near and delightful. Close is the tie which binds the heart of the mother to her first-born. Fond and tender is the affection of those

“Who grew in beauty side by side,
Who filled one home with glee.”

And there is a love between kindred souls fonder and deeper even than this: a "love strong as death." "Many waters cannot quench it, neither can the floods drown it." Yet that love which our blessed Lord prays may subsist, and which in virtue of his prayer does really subsist between all his true followers, through their union in their common Head, infinitely transcends and surpasses all relations merely earth-born and earth-enduring. This most interesting union among believers, often discussed, yet too often, alas! in practice forgotten, we cannot too frequently or too profoundly contemplate. This unity, in its pure state—as it should be, as we should seek to have it, rather than as, in some respects, it now is—possesses various characteristics. Briefly to consider a few of them may endear this union to our hearts, and excite our ardor in its pursuit, even if the subject receives no great accession of light from our discussion.

This union is then a real union. There undoubtedly must and will be different observances among Christians of different places and times. But a union in essentials true and real, not simply nominal and external, will still subsist. With the varying views and dispositions of men, various forms will naturally obtain in the different divisions of the Church of Christ. Peculiarities of circumstance will give rise to peculiarities of arrangement. What may be adapted to the situation of one, may be inconvenient for another. What may seem judicious to one, may appear less wise to

another. That which in one age and country is appropriate and useful, may be otherwise in a different time and land. Yet as in nature, with an almost infinite variety of external forms, there is in all a most beautiful harmony and oneness; so in the Church of God, with all its diversity of mere outward observances, there should, and in its pure state there does exist a real, delightful, and glorious unity.

Mingled hues one bow compose,
God's own sign to mortals given;
One vast ocean ebbs and flows,
Though in countless billows driven:
So, one Church the ransomed prove,
Though from varied realms they come,
One community of love,
Bound for one eternal home.

The reality of this union will further appear as we again observe that it is most intimate. Our blessed Lord likens it to the union subsisting between the distinct persons in one nature of the Deity. These are indeed separate, yet joined by the most intimate of bonds. Though divided, yet are they inseparably united. Their union is the nearest possible approach to identity. "These three are one." Believers are then united to each other by a most near and powerful tie. Once they were strangers to God and each other. Their paths were separate. Each made self the object of his devotion. They steered their courses by the stars of different hemispheres, and neither sought nor wished to sail side by side to a common haven.

But now the estrangement has been destroyed in Christ, and being joined to him as the branches to the vine, the members to the head, they are all also joined to each other in a single great brotherhood. They derive spiritual nourishment from the same source. They have common hopes, common fears, common friends, common foes, and one destiny. The peculiar manner of this spiritual blending we know not; nor do we know the manner of the union of the persons of the Godhead, by which this union is here illustrated by our Saviour. How believers are all intimately and vitally one, we cannot describe. How the great heart of the body of all Christians beats in unison with the pulsations of each individual member of Christ, we are unable to tell. We only know that Jesus is the grand bond of union, and that in him they are all in truth one with each other, as he is one with the Father and with them.

This union is, again, most affectionate. It must be such, because it is a mental and spiritual union. Bodies might be physically bound together—even the living to the dead—while no emotions of nearness, while even those of the bitterest repulsion, existed. There may also be found, both in the Church and the world, relations merely nominal and external, which, however seemingly near and tender, like golden fetters bind down and cut to the quick their unhappy subjects. But this union, being a true, spiritual, heartfelt tie, presupposes and induces the strongest affection. There may be

differences of opinion, of views, of outward forms and names, but they will be differences in harmony. Wherever a true Christian recognizes in his fellow-man the character of true piety; wherever he sees reflected in his brother man the lineaments of his Saviour, his heart warms toward him with affection. His denomination may be different, his complexion may be different, his language may be different, but his heart is the same, and that heart is one with that of Christ and all his people. Therefore he loves him. The suns of far different lands may shine on the birthplaces of the disciples of Jesus; the cradles of some may have been rocked by the storms of polar climes; others, island-born, may have listened to their mother's lullaby, as it mingled with the voices of the waves of Southern seas; and others still may have grown to manly strength amid the invigorating influences of temperate lands; but whenever, or wherever, or however they all meet, if all one in Christ, warm hearts blend, warm hands are clasped, and, strangers no more, but friends and brethren for the sake of their one Saviour, they mingle their sympathies, and look forward to that bright time when they shall "meet to part no more." For, again,

This union is indissoluble. Nothing can separate the Christian from the love of Christ his Lord; and as believers love each other for their Master's sake, and are bound in affection to each other through their common affection to him, this union is in like manner inseparable. It cannot be broken. It is

begun on earth, and perfected in heaven. In this fact of its indissolubility, we observe an eminently distinctive characteristic of the union of the saints. Herein it differs from all other relations merely "of the earth, earthy." These all terminate with the present life. However near, tender, and delightful they may be, all are sundered by the inexorable stroke of death. As the damps of the coming grave are gathering on her cold white brow, the dying maiden must bid her lover a last and long farewell. Parents are called to weep at the tombs of beloved children, for whose lives they would have coined their heart's blood drop by drop, and paid it with a willing hand. Brothers and sisters, who have been one in heart as one in home, must part at the sepulchre. And the fond husband, though he may hope to meet the wife of his youth, who sleeps in her early grave, in a better and brighter world, knows that in that world "they neither marry nor are given in marriage." Earthly relations in their earthly aspect there have terminated. But the union of Christians survives death itself. Even more, it is perfected by death. On earth it is often incomplete and interrupted. Barriers arising from misconception and human weakness intervene between those who should be one. But there all shall see eye to eye. Nothing shall mar their harmony. One with each other as with their Lord, they shall be for ever united in one long and sweet embrace of mutual affection. Even now saints on earth and saints in heaven form parts of one great brother-

hood; and in a little time their union will be completed above. Soon will the Church now militant become the Church for ever triumphant. In a little time will believers on earth join their brethren in heaven. For all, all are one in Christ.

“ One family, we dwell in Him,
One Church above, beneath;
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream, of death.
One army of the living God,
At his command we bow;
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.”

Finally, the union of Christians is a manifested union. Where relations so intimate and emotions so powerful as those we have described do really exist, they must and will make themselves to be seen and known. It is indeed sadly, yet undeniably true, that this union does not now discover itself as it might do and should do. The imperfection which shadows all things in this our incipient state of spiritual existence, sheds its blight even here. Yet this union does in some degree at present appear among God's true children. By whatever name called, they do and must recognize each other as brethren. If professed Christians know nothing of this union with each other, they have not the Spirit of Christ, and cannot be united to him: “For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God”—that God for whose sake in Christ he does or should love his brother Christian

—“whom he hath not seen?” Theoretical and speculative differences may, and, without question, always will exist among believers; but these should never interfere with their feelings of personal kindness and regard. Just in proportion as Christian character becomes purified and elevated, do these intellectual differences lose their power to weaken the harmony among the followers of the one Saviour. In the time of the latter-day glory, the beautiful picture of the lion lying down beside the lamb, and a little child leading both, appropriately symbolizes the delightful harmony which in that holy and pure age shall mark the one flock of the one Shepherd. For that blessed period we all long and pray. The increased efforts towards Christian union now put forth by the Church, are among the most cheering harbingers of its approach. Let us all, then, though seas may roll between us, and minor differences divide, yet feel ourselves one with each other through Christ our common Saviour. Let us labor to hasten on the time when all the earth shall have one Lord, one faith, one love. And as the contribution of each one of us, however humble or however large, to this great sum total of Christian affection, let us press onward to our common home above, with hearts and hands so joined with those of the great company of believers, that the world may even now take knowledge of us, and once more, as of old, say, of us and our fellow-disciples, “See how these Christians love one another!”

REV. S. D. BURCHARD, OF NEW YORK.

THE fact is painfully obvious to the most casual observer, that the beauty of the Church is marred by the existence of strife and alienation. Though represented in Scripture by imagery implying unity, strength, and beauty, yet separation and exclusion have too often been its prominent characteristics. Instead of being "one body fitly framed together," it has been many, having but little sympathy the one with the other. The spirit of schism early found its way into the bosom of the Church, and the Shibboleth of party was readily pronounced by its infant members. One was for Paul, another for Apollos, another for Cephas, and another for Christ. The same spirit has prevailed, to a greater or less extent, from that time down to the present. The Church is rent into fragments, and denominational zeal and party prejudice have alienated those who should dwell together in unity. Not always a loving and fraternal spirit exists in particular Churches that hold to the same truths and adopt the same mode of worship. The sweet flow of Christian sympathy is often interrupted, hearts become soured or alienated, and envyings or evil surmisings are the painful result. Such things ought not to be. In a relation so hallowed and tender, harmony and brotherly love should prevail. If such a state of things is desirable in a family, in a community, it is still more desirable in a Church. Here, if anywhere, it ought to be cherished and expressed.

Need it be said, in the first place, that harmony is essential to its very existence? What is a Church? It is not a mere organization, perfect in its form, beautiful in its ritual, gorgeous in its ceremonies, and captivating in its mode of worship. All this may exist, and the first element of a Church be absent. Piety is indispensable to the existence of a Church; and where it exists, breathing its spirit through all its forms, animating the whole with its life and vigor, there is a Church on which the "Lord commands his blessing, even life for evermore." But piety consists in *love*. This is the generic term which embraces all its external manifestations. Every grace of the spirit, every attractive virtue, every generous aspiration is embraced in the idea of love. Love to man is both the reality and the evidence of love to God. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" Love, then, is essential to piety: it is its essence and manifestation. But love implies concord and harmony, and is averse to strife and alienation. Is it not true, then, that harmony is essential to the very existence of a Church? Without it the altars of worship will be deserted, the candlestick will be removed out of its place, Ichabod will be the prophetic inscription of desolation and gloom.

Harmony is essential also to the moral power of a

Church. "The influence which she may exert for good does not consist in her numbers, or in her wealth, or in her intelligence, but more in her unity. This is the secret of her strength. The primitive Church was small, composed of ignorant and illiterate fishermen, poor and despised; but they were united; they were baptized into the same Spirit, animated by the same hopes, impelled by the same motives, consecrated to the same blessed work; and their influence was felt around the globe. It is still felt, and is as imperishable as the truth which they preached. It could be said of them: "See how these Christians love one another!" and such a sight convinced the skeptic and silenced the gainsayer. Let the same now be said of Christians, let it be seen that they are linked by kindred ties, and, though they may not be aided by miracle, their influence will be mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. The Roman Catholic Church has been regarded as a Colossus of strength, because of her unity: her members have all sworn allegiance to her sovereign head, and his will has been law, and his word, like a trumpet-call, has rallied his myriad vassals to the standard of their faith. Let Christendom be thus united in defending the doctrines of the Reformation, in a holy allegiance to Him who is Head over all things to the Church, and this towering Colossus will fall, and the slumbering nations will wake to the trumpet-call to battle and to victory. Our strength is now divided, our energies are weakened, and we present the miserable aspect

of a house divided against itself. We would hope that the tendencies of these latter days are to union and to an augmentation of strength. And when the Church shall present an unbroken phalanx, then a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.

Harmony, again, is essential to the comfort and happiness of a Church. Happiness is an object to be desired, and is sought by men in their active and daily pursuits. It is the great want of our nature, and if it is to be found anywhere in this sinning world, it is within the hallowed precincts of the Church. This is the sacred retreat from the conflicts and cares of the world, the metropolis of all that is good, the home of dear and sanctified affections, the depository of Heaven's best gifts to man. It is here that the heart lacerated with care, burdened with sorrow, may find consolation. It is here that the tempted and the tossed find shelter and protection. It is here that the fainting and the fearful meet with encouragement and hope. But wherein consists its power to meet this universal want of our nature? The answer to this inquiry would lead to a full analysis of all the influences with which the Church is blessed. Here is truth with all its wonderful adaptations and harmonies, and prayer that prevails with God, and faith which is the substance of things not seen, and hope that illumines the present and gilds the future; but, above all things, charity is here, that sanctifies all and survives all, and blends all hearts in one com-

mon feeling of universal brotherhood. This makes the Church a type of heaven—a rest and refuge for the soul. Without this, all other influences fail to have their legitimate effect: truth will be powerless, prayer will be unanswered, the eye of faith will be dim, hope will be vacillating, and there will be left no resources to comfort and console. But if heart meets heart, if the sweet spirit of love is diffused throughout the Church, then its members are happy, and cheerfully do they bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfil the law of Christ.

Harmony is also essential to the moral beauty of a Church. We are naturally charmed by that which is beautiful. The landscape, the brilliant canopy above, with its myriad stars looking down like angel eyes upon us, the majestic flow of a river, the marble chiselled into a form so perfect that it seems almost to breathe and speak, the canvas all glowing with life, the flower that blooms by the wayside, are all beautiful, and awaken corresponding emotions of beauty in our own minds. But there is a *moral* beauty that has double power to awaken the sublime and the beautiful within us. The gentle sufferer, who meets with trials without a murmur, who bears up against calamity with the hopeful assurance that all is well, exhibits a spirit truly beautiful, a spirit that charms while it subdues us. When we see a man who can triumph over a bad temper, who can say to his insurgent passions, *Be still*, who can bear insult without retaliation, we are impressed with the idea of moral beauty. When the Saviour

prayed for his enemies, and remembered his mother amid the agonies of crucifixion, a moral beauty encircled him which lingers still in our vision, and makes its impress upon our hearts. The scenes of home, of childhood, of family devotions, where the censer glowed, and the morning and evening incense ascended, are all beautiful. We remember them with love and admiration. But what beauty is comparable to a Church, when all its members are united in mutual love and cordial fellowship?

“When each can feel his brother’s sigh,
And with him bear a part;
When sorrow flows from eye to eye,
And joy from heart to heart!”

It is like an oasis in the desert, a verdant spot over which the wings of angels hover; or, to change the figure, a palace adorned and fitted for a habitation of God by his Spirit. Can any object be more enchantingly beautiful? Is it any marvel that the devout Psalmist should have said: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore!”

REV. SAMUEL H. COX, D.D., OF BROOKLYN, N. Y.

It would be strange in such a world as ours if no objection arose against the cause of Christian union. The world is perversely ingenious, because it is depraved, and because depravity perverts without annihilating the power of the faculties. Besides, the cause of Christian union is too good for the world's appreciation. The character of the world and the character of that cause are mutually repugnant; and hence the world, finding in it nothing after its own heart, encounters its annunciation with frowning or contemptuous indifference, sometimes with an outbreak of cordial hostility. John xv. 18-21.

Neither is this the worst of it. The Church, that is in the world, yet not of the world, often becomes, by gradual concessions and defections, so much like the world, as insensibly to adopt the world's maxims, pursue the world's policy, and resemble the world's character. The consequence is, that the great truth of *the Divine and eternal unity of the Church of Christ* becomes spiritless and common in her view, or shines like a star of heaven in the misty atmosphere of night, shorn of its brilliancy, ambiguous in its beauty, deprived of its attraction, and heavenly and divine no more. In plainer English, the Church lacks piety to appreciate as she ought the great truth of the Church's unity, and the great cause resulting from it. Hence, the dominant objection against our cause is precisely such as a state of Laodicean

apathy in the Church itself might naturally produce. There may be other objections, and yet that to which we now refer is incomparably the chief and captain; it is this: *it is not popular*. These words appear with some to be talismanic and conclusive. Our reply to the objection which they contain is two-fold:

First, The allegation is not true, in point of fact; and,

Second, If it were true, it is not valid; it is of no great worth or importance.

I. We aver that the objection is not true in point of fact. By this we mean, not that men, or even Christians, love the truth and the cause of Christian union as much as they ought in all conscience and consistency to love it, or that they have any common enthusiasm to evince in its favor, compared with its deserts, or their own kindling raptures on meaner themes, such as move whole cities to honor the advent of a popular civic hero, while living, or the relics of a deceased statesman and ex-president when dead. The enthusiasm of the populace is a thing of its own sort: not always the most enlightened, nor the best balanced, nor the wisest by reflection, nor the most excellent and steady in principle of all the things ever known or chronicled under the sun. Their "hosannas to the Son of David" are possibly exchanged in a day or two for the cry of "Crucify him!" and we know of few things of more remarkable instability than popular favor.

But some of the people are beginning to read their Bibles with their eyes open to this great truth, that *the Church of Christ is one*; and they have wondered at the quantity and quality of biblical testimony in its favor. *The bride—the Lamb's wife*—has appeared to them adorned with new and celestial glories, even in her earthly minority. And her unity, as heavenly, Divine, and eternal, as necessary and glorious, and essential alike to her being and her blessedness, has loomed large to their delighted vision, and their very Bibles have seemed to acquire new worth and attraction in its light. If it is only a vision of faith, still it is legitimate, truthful, and refreshing. It has strengthened their piety. It has increased their love of Christ and Christians; and it has charmed their prospects with the light of the millennium beaming in the distance, and typifying the richer light of heaven's eternity to their comforted and edified confidence in God. In such a world as this, a vision of faith like that is a rare luxury, and we desire that every Christian may enjoy it and realize its fruits as often as possible. We need to be cheered in this house of our pilgrimage with some brighter vision than those of sense ever are, or can be, in their fallacy and grossness. Hence,

II. We say that if the allegation of *unpopular* were true, still it avails little as argument.

Is it with Christians that we reason, and with the veritable ministers of Christ?—with those whose religion has been always persecuted on the earth since the scene of furious lapidation that drove

Stephen, the proto-martyr of the Christian dispensation, to heaven, and virtually since Abel, the proto-martyr of the world, was murdered for his faith by his own brother, the first-born of human kind?

Our love of what is popular is perhaps excessive, and peculiar to our country. It may become the abuse as well as the growth of our free institutions. It may debilitate and otherwise injure the evangelical power of our piety. It is too common everywhere, and the temptation is real, as history very memorably shows, for the Church in every country to conform to the State, instead of conforming the Church wholly to Christ, and the State analogously and by legitimate attraction to the Church. Our politicians are not all of them the best counsellors or the best exemplars of what the Church ought to be and to do and to suffer. With some of them, it is quite a maxim, and even a cardinal one, *Vox populi est Dei*, that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Now, if in any sense or degree this maxim were true or right in politics—which, as American republicans that love our country dearly, we have no propensity gratuitously to question, or in every sense to deny—is it therefore true in religion? Is it to such an oracle that the conscience or the creed of the Christian is tamely or primely to defer? What if the *vox populi* should shout again as it once did in the sacred city of Jerusalem, among a crowd of the professing worshippers of Jehovah, and around the tribunal of the procurator for imperial power, “Crucify him!” shall we say *est Dei* here,

or *est diaboli*? So in revolutionary France; when the people were very dominant, and very reformatory, and very united, worshipping *Reason*, personified in the form of a naked harlot, and dogmatizing the glorious discoveries to the world, that "there is no God," and that "death is a perpetual sleep!" And were the people in our glorious nation to take it into their heads to say that all men will be saved, and they are mean-spirited "partialists" who doubt it; or that there is no unity of any sort, virtual or ultimate, among real Christians; or that the evangelical Churches and ministers here have no interests in common, or dangers, or duties, or destinies, or derivations in common; or that the *commonwealth of Israel* is an imagination merely, without any proper existence; is it so? Perhaps the same persons would think, also, that the cause of our blessed Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, was of no importance, or not popular; should we, therefore, abandon it? Let us, friends of the cause of Christ and the union of his followers, remember that truth Divine is our rule of thought and action; that truth is no pensioner on human opinion, or the *aura popularis* of any community, and that what is divinely true is the only oracle of what ought to be humanly popular.

We remember some fine utterances in this connection by the Honorable and Reverend Baptist Wriothesley Noel, A. M., in Exeter Hall, London, August 26, 1846, the day of the first public celebration of the successful result of the deliberations of

that memorable time, which we here venture to quote briefly from recollection, in substance as follows :

“ Our opponents say it is a failure, it can never succeed. Well, this scene before me looks not like it, where thousands of crowding listeners testify their common feeling of delight and interest in the cause. But possibly it may fail ! And what then ? Was our basis false ? Has the truth failed ? Is the Church not one ? Is heaven not one ? Is Christ divided ? Is the cause not of God ? Is it Satan that promotes among the disciples of Christ that union which is strength ? Are our resources of reliance gone when our hopes of alliance go ? Not at all, gentlemen. Nor even in that event, the failure of our present organic enterprise, though we hope in God for its protection and continuance ; not even then, I say, have we failed. We enterprised this cause in hope of doing good, and good already we have done. Is it nothing to see these allied brethren and fathers by thousands uniting their testimony to the unity of the universal Church ? lifting that great truth, high and flaming in the midst of heaven, as an angel in the sun, for the gaze of nations, for the consideration of mankind, for the faith of the world, for the honor of God, for the rebuke of schism, for the glory of our Saviour, and for the antedating of his eternal triumphs ? Much has been done already—much substantial good. We see, we feel it. And as for our cause, is it not the cause of God ? It cannot fail ! It must and shall prosper, whatever

becomes of its enemies, whatever becomes of our present organization. Blessed be God, we are its friends; and its greatest friend is God himself, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost! For myself, Sir Culling, and brethren who hear me, I am congratulated and happy in the assurance that, for what humble part I have been honored to bear in this noble movement, whatever comes to pass beside, I shall never regret what I did to honor and to aid it."

Such are the sentiments which we willingly adopt, and feel comforted and enlarged by their influence. Indeed, the last allusion is inspiring. It brings to our mind many other sentiments of the sort, which we cannot quote here, but which are worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance. We add, however, one other specimen, that of our excellent and amiable brother, the editor of the *Evangelical Magazine*, Rev. John Morison, D.D., LL.D., of Brompton, London, and give it substantially, as the former:

"There is a magnificent principle in all this movement, which quite sways and charms my heart, while it claims the full approbation of my understanding; a principle which I have always believed and endeavored practically to honor, but which never before seemed so illustrious, and so grand, and so purely godlike, as at this moment; a principle eminently Protestant, eminently scriptural, eminently great and worthy; a principle which it requires some abstraction from appearances and phases clearly to discover, and to appreciate which as it

deserves may well exercise the profoundest cogitations of the philosopher, the theologian, and the Christian. Many a reasoner of the surface has never seen it; and many have perished in their sins through the temptation to infidelity which darkened them in denying it. It is a principle simple as sublime, useful as demonstrable, practical as sentimental, and happy to the soul as it is important to the conduct—the Church is *one*. There it is! All Christians, no matter what else they are, are one family, with one paternity, and one inheritance. The place where they live, the language they speak, the zone they inhabit, the clothes they wear, the height of their stature, the hue of their skin, or any other circumstances that checker their exterior, all these are nothing: they are one, as no other community on earth is one. With them may my lot be cast for ever, living, dying, rising at the resurrection of the just, and soaring at last with the finished number, innumerable, of millions before the throne of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. It is this principle that gives me courage, hope, and strength as a member of this great and good Alliance; and in its power I devoutly commend our cause to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom (the Father) the whole family in heaven and earth is named, and pray with confidence for his guardianship, his guidance, and his benediction on it and its friends.”

A single reflection, and we conclude. During the past winter our brethren in this vicinity called sev-

eral public meetings for united prayer, especially for the outpouring of the Spirit on all our churches, and the revival of the work of God in them. Experience in this shows us what we can do, and what we ought to do. Some joined us in this doing and acting who had forborne to join us in our preparatory deliberations. They said, Do, and we will do; act, and we will act; in deeds of goodness we can and will unite. For action we were waiting, and in action we are one. This is well, only we suggest to such respected brethren how congruous and proper it is for the Alliance to call such meetings, when no other organ can! They have the prestige or prerogative, not by assumption, but because they are known to be pledged to union, to Christian union, to the interests of the Church universal, to the unsectarian catholicism of the kingdom of God. Let us then rally here; our dangers and our duties seem alike to require it. In union is strength. How frail is a fibre of hemp! Yet many of them united, compacted together by that which every joint supplieth, makes a cable, weighs a massive anchor, and sways a mighty ship in her moorings, fixed and immovable. Can we not unite on the liberal and enlightened basis of the Evangelical Alliance? We can! We forfeit no principle; we own the things in which we agree; we seek common interests; we typify the character of the Church universal; we comfort one another; we "speak the truth in love; we grow up into him in all things, who is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly

joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

WHITEFIELD AND WESLEY.

IN our efforts to promote Christian union among all who "love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," in these days, it may not be amiss to look back and consider those of good men, in behalf of the same glorious object, who have lived before us.

Circumstances, of which it is unnecessary for us to speak, led Whitefield and Wesley to enter into a controversy which was in many respects unhappy, although it arose from a conscientious regard for what each deemed the important interests of truth. But, in their severest strictures upon the opinions of each other, they cherished toward each other the "love of the brethren." Whitefield entertained the filial feelings of a child in relation to Wesley. He not only *loved* him—he *revered* him. The following letter which he addressed to him from Philadelphia, (September 11, 1747,) breathes the right spirit:

"REV. AND VERY DEAR SIR:—Not long ago I received your kind letter, dated in February last. Your others, I believe, came to hand, and I hope, ere now, you have received my answers. My heart is really for an outward as well as an inward union.

Nothing shall be wanting on my part to bring it about; but I cannot see how that can possibly be effected till we all think and speak the same things. However, I agree in giving a universal offer to all poor sinners that will come and taste of the waters of life. But it is difficult to determine such matters at a distance. Some time next year, if the Redeemer spares my life, I hope to see you face to face. In the meanwhile the language of my heart is,

“O let us find the ancient way,
Our wondering foes to move;
And force the heathen world to say,
See how these brethren love!”

“I hope ere long to be delivered from my outward embarrassments: I long to owe no man any thing but love. This is a debt, reverend sir, I shall never be able to discharge to you or your brother: Jesus will pay you all. For his sake I love and honor you very much, and rejoice as much in your success as in my own. I cannot agree with you in some principles; but that need not hinder love, since I trust we hold the foundation, even Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

“The Lord bless what is right, and rectify what is wrong, in us all! Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen. O for heaven, when we shall mistake, and judge, and grieve one another no more! Lately, I have thought I was sailing several times into the blessed harbor, but it seems I must put out to sea again. My Redeemer’s will be done! Reverend sir, I salute you for my dear fellow-pilgrim, who is gone

forward. Continue to pray for us, and assure yourselves that you are always remembered by,

“Reverend and very dear sir,

“Your most affectionate, though unworthy, younger brother, and willing servant, for Christ’s sake,

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.”

Mr. Wesley preached Whitefield’s funeral sermon, and, in his fraternal testimony, took occasion to exhibit and inculcate Christian union. He asked: “Is there any other fruit of the grace of God with which he was eminently endowed, and the want of which among the children of God he frequently and passionately lamented? There is one—that is catholic love; that sincere and tender affection which is due to all those who, we have reason to believe, are children of God by faith; in other words, all those, in every persuasion, who ‘fear God and work righteousness.’ He longed to see all who had ‘tasted of the good word’ of a true catholic spirit; a word little understood and still less experienced by many who have it frequently in their mouth. Who is he that answers this character? Who is a man of a catholic spirit? One who loves as friends, as brethren in the Lord, as joint partakers of the present kingdom of heaven, and fellow-heirs of his eternal kingdom, all, of whatever opinion, mode of worship, or congregation, who believe in the Lord Jesus; who love God and man; who, rejoicing to please and fearing to offend God, are careful to abstain from evil, and zealous of good works. He is a man of a truly catholic spirit who

bears all these continually upon his heart; who, having an unspeakable tenderness for their persons, and an earnest desire for their welfare, does not cease to commend them to God in prayer, as well as to plead their cause before men; who speaks comfortably to them, and labors by all his words to strengthen their hands in God. He assists men to the uttermost of his power in all things spiritual and temporal; he is ready to 'spend and be spent' for them, yea, to 'lay down his life for his brethren.'

"How amiable a character is this! how desirable to every child of God! But why is it then so rarely found? How is it that there are so few instances of it? Indeed, supposing we have tasted of the love of God, how can any of us rest till it is our own? Why, there is a delicate device whereby Satan persuades thousands that they may stop short of it, and yet be guiltless. It is well if many here present are not in this 'snare of the devil, taken captive at his will.' 'O yes,' says one, 'I have all this love for those I believe to be children of God; but I will never believe he is a child of God who belongs to that vile congregation; can he, do you think, be a child of God who holds such detestable opinions? or he that joins in such senseless and superstitious if not idolatrous worship?' So we may justify ourselves in one sin by adding a second to it! We excuse the want of love in ourselves by laying the blame on others! To color our own devilish temper, we pronounce our brethren children of the devil. O, beware of this; and if you

are already taken in the snare, escape out of it as soon as possible. Go and learn that truly catholic love which 'is not rash' or hasty in judging; that love which 'thinketh no evil,' which believeth and hopeth all things, which makes all the allowance for others that we desire others should make for us! Then we shall take knowledge of the grace of God which is in every man, whatever be his opinions or mode of worship; then will all that fear God be near and dear unto us 'in the bowels of Jesus Christ.' Was not this the spirit of our dear friend? and why should it not be ours? O, thou God of love! how long shall thy people be a byword among the heathen? How long shall they laugh us to scorn, and say, See how these Christians hate one another? When wilt thou roll away our reproach? 'Shall the sword devour for ever?' How long will it be ere thou bid thy people return from 'following each other?' Now, at least, 'let all the people stand still and pursue after their brethren no more!' But whatever others do, let all of us, my brethren, hear the voice of him that, being dead, yet speaketh. Suppose ye hear him say, 'Now, at least, be ye followers of me as I was of Christ. Let brother no more lift up sword against brother, neither know ye war any more. Rather put ye on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, brotherly kindness, gentleness, long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. Let the time past suffice for strife, envy, contention; for biting and devouring one another.'"

MR. FLETCHER.

LET us be afraid of a sectarian spirit. We may, indeed, and we ought to be, more familiar with the professors with whom we are more particularly connected, just as soldiers of the same regiment are more familiar with one another than with those who belong to other regiments. But the moment this particular attachment grows to such a degree as to make a party in the army of King Jesus, or of King George, it breaks the harmony which ought to subsist between all the parts, and hinders the general service which is expected from the whole body. In what a deplorable condition would be the king's affairs, if each Colonel in his army refused to do duty with another Colonel; and if, instead of mutually supporting one another in a day of battle, each said to the rest: "I will have nothing to do with you and your corps: you may fight yonder, if you please: I, and my men, will keep here by ourselves, doing what seems good in our own eyes. As we expect no assistance from you, so we promise you that you shall have none from us. And you may think yourselves well off, if we do not join the common enemy, and fire at you; for your regimentals are different from ours, and therefore you are no part of our army." If so absurd a behavior were excusable, it would be among the wild, cruel men who compose an army of Tartars or savages; but it admits of no excuse from men who call themselves believers, which is another

name for the followers of Him who laid down his life for his enemies, and perpetually exhorts his soldiers to "love one another, as brethren"—yea, "as He loved us."

Let us, then, particularly beware of inordinate self-love. It is too often the real source of our divisions, when love to truth is their pretended cause. If St. Paul could say of fellow-believers in his time, "They all seek their own," how much more may it be said of degenerate believers in our days? Who can tell all the mischief done by this ungenerous and base transfer? Who can declare all the mysteries of error and iniquity, which stand upon the despicable foundation of the little words, *I, me, and mine*? Could we see the secret inscriptions which the Searcher of hearts can read upon the first stones of our little Babels—*my* chapel, *my* party, *my* congregation, *my* connections, *my* popularity, *my* hope of being esteemed by my partisans, *my* fear of being suspected by them, *my* jealousy of those who belong to the opposite party, *my* system, *my* favorite opinions, *my* influence, etc., etc.! To all these egotisms let us constantly oppose those awful words of our Lord: "Except a man deny himself, he cannot be my disciple." Till we cordially oppose our inordinate attachment to our own interest, we "sacrifice to our own net," in our public duties; and even when we "preach Christ," it is to be feared that we do it more "out of contention," than out of a real concern for his interest.

DR. WATTS.

HAVE we never observed what a mighty prevalence the advance of self-interest has over the hearts and tongues of men, and inflames them with malice against their neighbors? They assault every different opinion with rage and clamor; they rail at the persons of all other parties, to ingratiate themselves with their own. When they put to death [or bitter reproach] the ministers of the gospel, they boast, like Jehu, when he slew the priests of Baal, "Come and see my zeal for the Lord." And as he designed hereby to establish the kingdom in his own hands, so they, to maintain the reputation they have acquired among their own sect. But ah! how little do they think of the wounds that Jesus the Lord receives by every bitter reproach they cast on his followers!—*Equal Church, Part III.*







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